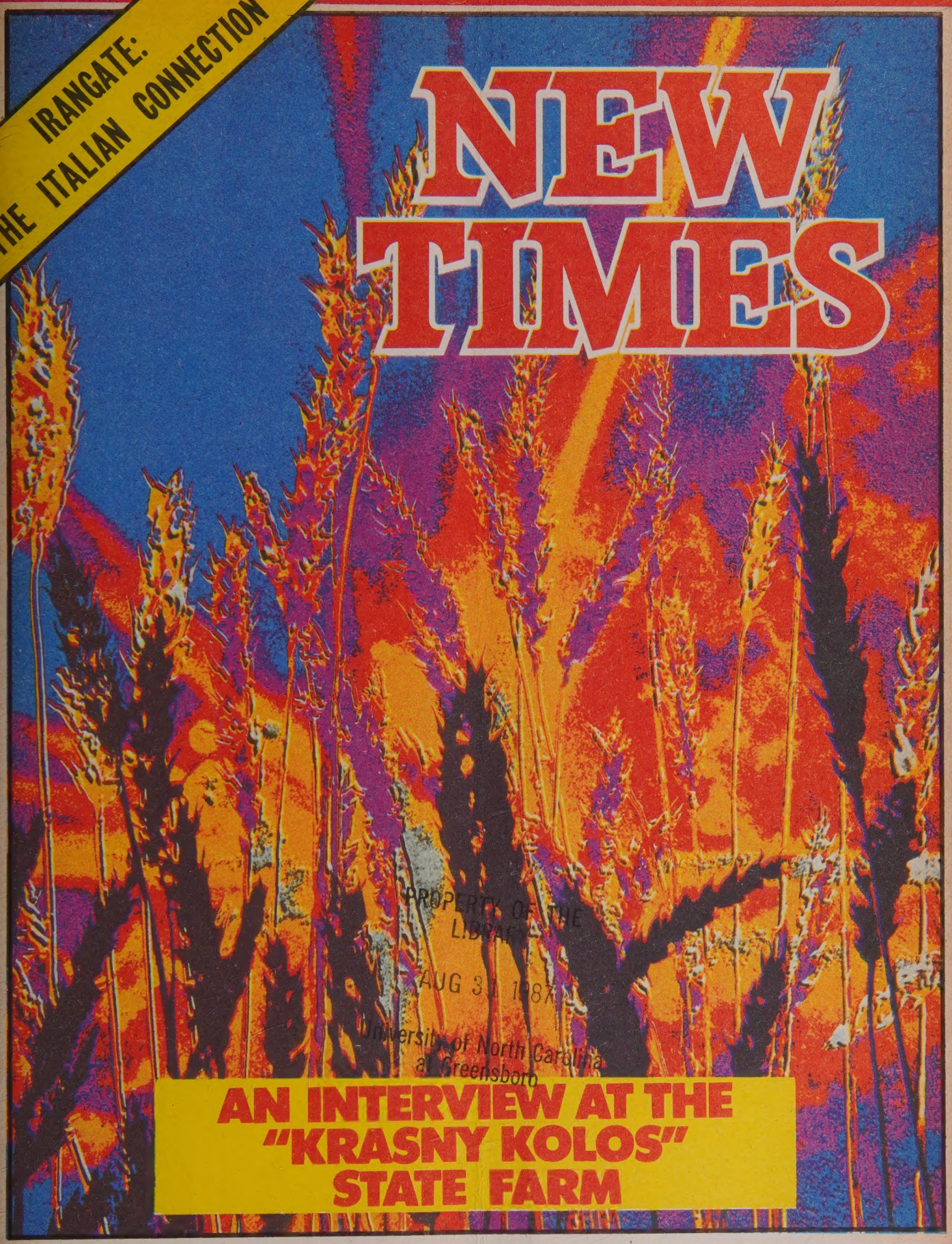
A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

IRANGATE: THE ITALIAN CONNECTION

NEW TIMES



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AN INTERVIEW AT THE "KRASNY KOLOS" STATE FARM

SHANGHAI IMPRESSIONS

1917–1987

TIME AND PEOPLE

U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt would often recall that in 1933 his wife visited an American school and saw there a map of the world with a great white space upon it. The teacher told her that it was a blank with no name. Actually, it was Soviet Russia. The incident, the President said, provided one of the reasons why he had asked Mikhail Kalinin to send a representative over to Washington to discuss establishing diplomatic relations.

In the 1930s, the Soviet Union made impetuous progress and rapidly gained international recognition. The whole world marvelled at the successes it achieved as it fulfilled its ambitious five-year plans. It was ridiculous, to say the least, to go on ignoring the world's first state of workers and peasants, and Washington was not alone in realizing this. In 1934, the Soviet Union was admitted to the League of Nations on the initiative of the organization's thirty member states.

Maxim Litvinov at a League of Nations session, 1934.

The name of Georgi Dimitrov became a symbol of the fight against nazism.

Pockets of tension continued to spread on the map of the world like cancerous tumours. Germany, Italy and Japan were already flexing their military muscles. In 1933, the U.S.S.R. submitted to the Geneva Disarmament Conference a draft declaration on the definition of the aggressor. Our country came up with an extensive programme for economic cooperation at an international economic conference in London. At the League of Nations, Moscow upheld the idea of divisibility of and urged the est ment of a collective ity system. In 193 U.S.S.R. signed mut sistance treaties France and Czech kia.

The idea of givi aggressor a collecti buff never mater however. An ag planning an attack U.S.S.R. could exp dulgence. Soviet re tatives warned i that guns could first in the West...

The Brussels Peace Congress, 1936.

A SOVIET WEEKLY
OF WORLD AFFAIRS

NEW TIMES

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Cover by **Sergei Kostromin**

REVOLUTION, PERESTROIKA, SOLIDARITY
What do people in the F.R.G. think about the ideas of the October Revolution, about the current changes in the U.S.S.R.! Our Bonn correspondent talks with Willi Gerns, one of the leaders of the German Communist Party.

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In 1968, this memorial plaque was fixed on a wall of the house at 53, Kaiserstrasse, Munich, where Lenin had lived. Two years later, the plaque was smashed by a bomb explosion.

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FROM OUR MAILBAG

Having carefully read Larisa Kuznetsova's article "A woman executive: why not!" (No.25/87), I cannot agree fully with the author. The role of women as home-makers and mothers should not be underestimated. From prehistoric times to our days that has been their prime duty. That is the way it should be, in my opinion. Otherwise, the women's career boom, as Larisa Kuznetsova put it, might end up with men having to do everything for the care of the family and the home.

S. SMIRNOV
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

I was not yet 22 when early in April 1944 I made the choice which many German soldiers made at different times - I finally determined what my attitude should be to the war unleashed by Hitler. I crossed the front line and after two nights of walking reached American positions near Aprilia in Italy. I learned much later that a search for me was mounted both at the front and in Hamburg where my parents lived. Finally, I was branded as a deserter. Today I regret only one thing - that I did not take such a step earlier.

WERNER MAASSEN
Eisenhüttenstadt, G.D.R.

As a reader of your magazine, what I would like to see in your pages is not one and the same assessment of events, but different assessments. Only then will the reader be able to form a true picture of what is happening and make up his mind about them. And that, as I understand it, is the main task of the press.

A. GALKIN
Perm Region, U.S.S.R.

EDITORIAL

A CLASH OF INTERESTS

August is the hottest month in the Persian Gulf. The temperature reaches 60 degrees Centigrade in the shade. A metal object exposed to the sun for a short while gets almost red-hot, and will give you a first-degree burn if you touch it. This summer the atmosphere in the Gulf has heated up beyond measure, and any rash political gesture is fraught with dangerous consequences.

The situation there cannot but cause anxiety to those who realize how closely all developments on our tiny planet are intertwined, and how easily a global conflagration can be sparked off by a seemingly insignificant incident. That is why millions of people listen in to news from the Persian Gulf so apprehensively every morning.

Reports coming in from the region are alarming indeed. A Kuwaiti supertanker, which had recently changed its Arabic name for an American one, Bridgeton, struck a mine. Its U.S. escort ships, which had failed to prevent the accident, pushed the damaged tanker forward and sailed gingerly in its wake, using it as a huge minesweeper. Shortly afterwards Iran announced a change of tactics: instead of attacking tankers it would now strike at ground targets in Kuwait and other Arab countries unless Iraq stopped bombing industrial installations in Iran.

In a recent resolution the U.N. Security Council calls for a cease-fire and an end to the Iran-Iraq war. Iraq has officially announced that it would comply with the resolution, but Iran has refused to do so. Curiously, however, Ali Akbar Velayati, the Iranian Foreign Minister, said the following in Geneva on July 28: "The U.S. administration was the first to violate the Security Council resolution by sending warships (to the Persian Gulf. - **Ed.**)."

The Iranian Minister is right: the U.S. convoy sailed into the Persian Gulf after the adoption of the Security Council resolution, thus violating it. This answers the question: who needs the crisis? The Bridgeton tanker incident has led to an escalation of the West's intervention in the Persian Gulf. The Pentagon is sending helicopters there, and battleship Missouri is heading for the Gulf at full speed.

Tension is mounting. A French squadron has set off for the Persian Gulf. The British military presence there is growing. In the F.R.G. there are calls for Bonn's intervention in the region contrary to the country's Constitution. The U.S. press insists that all NATO countries should rush their forces to the Persian Gulf. And this at a time when the Gulf is already crammed with foreign warships!

True, three Soviet ships have also entered the Gulf. But it is the Soviet Union that has called for a withdrawal of all foreign ships from there, the Soviet ones included, of course. This proposal, which is in full accord with the spirit of the Security Council resolution, remains in force.

What we have here is a clash of interests. The U.S. and its NATO allies want to gain a firm foothold in that vital oil-bearing region by aggravating the situation there. People of good will want to bring down the military-political - if not the natural - temperature in the Persian Gulf before it is too late.

REVOLUTION, PERESTROIKA, SOLIDARITY

These were the subjects brought up by New Times own correspondent Alexander Tolpegin in his conversation with Willi Gerns, member of the Presidium and Secretariat of the German Communist Party.

N.T.: Today, on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution, the mass media in the capitalist world often toss up the idea that if in the 70th year of Soviet power the Communists themselves have come to the conclusion that revolutionary changes, a radical renewal in all spheres of Soviet society are necessary, then it shows that the ideas of the October revolution have lost their significance and attraction.

Gerns: Attempts to belittle the significance of the October revolution have been made throughout the seven decades of the existence of the Soviet state. There is nothing new in that. Mountains of paper and a sea of ink have been used to try to prove that the revolution in Russia was a historical mistake, that needs to be rectified, as it allegedly produced a totalitarian regime.

In reality, however, perestroika continues rather than negates the October revolution, as it is based on the previous immense gains of socialist construction.

We, the West German Communists, believed and believe today that the Great October Socialist Revolution was the most outstanding event of the 20th century and, moreover, of all previous history.

I have no doubts whatever that the implementation of the programme for the accelerated social and economic development of Soviet society will reveal the advantages of socialism more fully and will increase the attraction of its ideas, and that means the ideas of the October revolution.

N.T.: What is the reaction of rank-and-file members of the party and communist sympathizers to our perestroika?

Gerns: Without exaggeration, I would say it is enthusiastic. Communists are full of admiration for the courage shown by the CPSU in criticizing the mistakes and shortcomings of the past. We are impressed by the boldness of the new objectives and the decisiveness and consistency shown in implementing the proposed programme of changes. And, of course, we fully support the new Soviet peace initiatives, the principles of new thinking in the approach to world problems, and the plan for the phased elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. The changes in the Soviet Union and its dynamic foreign policy open up new possibilities for us too - as the party working for socialist goals - to enhance our prestige and extend our influence among the population. Our job is to make use of these opportunities.

During the discussions critical questions are, of course, also asked. The ones that crop up probably most frequently go something like this: how was it possible for a tendency to stagnation to develop in a socialist society, why did negative phenomena spread, and why was no effort made for a long time to combat them? Many comrades are worried whether there are guarantees that perestroika will be irreversible and the mistakes of the past will not be repeated.

Then there are questions that are directed specifically at us, leaders of the German Communist Party. They concern our propaganda of socialism. Indeed, this requires attention, because an idealized picture often results in disillusionment. We must depict socialist society as it really is - with all its indisputable achievements and advantages over capitalism, but also with its unsolved problems and difficulties.

In this connection the question arises of improving the exchange of information between the fraternal parties. We must talk to each other openly, in the communist spirit. Our picture of the socialist countries is based chiefly on the information we receive from our fraternal parties.

N.T.: Has anything changed in this respect recently? I mean with regard to information about the Soviet Union?

Gerns: Yes, and substantially. Today our problem is not that we get little information or that it is presented in a rosy light. On the contrary, there is plenty of information. Events in the Soviet Union are moving so fast that, to tell the truth, we are having difficulty in keeping up with them and digesting them.

The Soviet press is publishing a lot of interesting and useful material. One example. It is perhaps not the most important issue, but it does play a certain role in the present discussions. The capitalist press had plenty to say about the drug problem in the Soviet Union, and deliberately exaggerated it. Then Pravda carried an interview with the Soviet Minister of the Interior, who gave figures and described what is being done to combat this evil. Now we can quote an authoritative source.

N.T.: Responding to your call for a frank discussion, let us speak frankly of the situation in the GCP.

Gerns: Let's.

N.T.: What place does the GCP hold today in West German society? Let me explain my question. The Communist Party of Germany was founded at the end of 1918. The question then, at the height of the revolution, was which course would the country follow - the road to socialism, like Russia, or would capitalist relations be preserved? The revolution in Germany was defeated, but since then much has changed. No one soberly assessing the present situation would claim that the F.R.G. or other Western countries stand on the brink of a revolution. Yet the GCP, as its programme says, is a revolutionary party of the working class. Capitalist and Social Democrat politicians go as far as to describe the GCP as a hangover from the past. And to back up their view, they cite the very modest results of the Communists at the elections.

Gerns: A very wide-ranging question, and hard to answer briefly. I shall try to concentrate on the most important aspects.

Yes, our party is small, but its influence is greater than one would think if it is judged only from election results. The same politicians and journalists who are trying to convince themselves and others that the GCP is no more than a hangover from the past are compelled to acknowledge the role and influence of Communists in the peace movement, in the trade unions, and in the factories.

It is also true that today we do not stand on the brink of a revolution. But it is impossible to deny that the contradictions of capitalism are becoming increasingly acute and that capitalism is incapable of resolving them. In the F.R.G. we have a very high and stable level of unemployment, the so-called "new poverty" that embraces millions of people, and a constantly expanding and perfected system of surveillance and control over people's thoughts and behaviour. Capitalism is unable to cope with the social consequences of the scientific and technical revolution, and with the ecological crisis; it is breeding an arms race and spending vast resources on it. All this speaks for the objective necessity of socialism. And there is, therefore, a need for a party working for socialism.

But the GCP is necessary not only from the point of view of the long-term prospects for the country's development. Our party is inseparable from, although fully independent of, the forces in our country that are seeking to prevent nuclear war and are working for a policy of détente in relations with the socialist countries, for a 35-hour working week with no cuts in wages, for a programme of full employment, and against the restriction of democratic rights.

N.T.: The thesis that the GCP is unnecessary is sometimes backed up by the argument that the working class is allegedly shrinking and even "disappearing." Entire branches of industry are now dying in the F.R.G. - steel, coal and shipbuilding. Some factories are closing down altogether, while at others the number of employees is being greatly reduced as a result of mass layoffs. Is the Communist Party losing its traditional base as a result of all this?

Gerns: The working class is not being reduced, nor is it "disappearing." On the contrary, the number of workers is increasing. Simply, as a result of the scientific and technical revolution, substantial changes are taking place in its composition. It's true that the importance of the traditional industries is declining, but new ones are emerging and developing rapidly. For instance, the number of people employed in the services industry has increased.

The changes in the working class, and in the social structure of the population are reflected in the composition of the GCP. We are getting more office workers and intellectuals, which confirms the mounting prestige and influence of the party among these sections of the population. But you should not forget that they bring with them their own specific experience and their ideas on organizational principles. Unlike industrial workers, they lack recognition of the need for collective action.

So the shifts in the social structure of society, while opening up new opportunities, at the same time pose certain problems. Such are the dialectics at work.

N.T.: In speaking of the anniversary of the October revolution, one cannot but speak of the traditions of working-class solidarity. In the Soviet Union people remember the German internationalists who, arms in hand, defended the gains of the October revolution; they remember the "Hands Off Soviet Russia" movement in Germany, those who helped us build socialism, and the heroes of the anti-fascist resistance. What can you tell us about how these traditions are being carried on today?

Gerns: We remain true to these traditions. Ernst Thaelmann once called a Communist's attitude to the Soviet Union the touchstone of his loyalty to the revolutionary working-class movement. We believe that remains true today.

We see our internationalist duty as fighting anti-Sovietism, exposing the myth of a Soviet military threat, and disseminating the truth about the Soviet Union and its policy. These are the aims of the various events we are planning to mark the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution.

Communists are the most ardent supporters of good-neighbourly relations and all-round cooperation between the F.R.G. and the U.S.S.R. That is why we welcomed President Weizsäcker's call during his visit to the Soviet Union to build these relations on a solid, long-term basis. But we believe that such a desire is not helped by the attempts of certain circles in our country to hinder agreement on eliminating medium-range missiles in Europe, or statements to the effect that the German question still remains open.

N.T.: You mentioned the problem of anti-Sovietism which indeed seriously poisons relations between our peoples. But as far as I can judge from my observations, the population's attitude towards the Soviet Union is changing perceptibly for the better. For instance, at the forum within the framework of the Evangelical Church Days prominent West German personalities described anti-Sovietism and anti-communism as the main obstacles to mutual understanding with the Soviet Union.

Gerns: You're right. Many people have come to understand the ominous role played by anti-Sovietism in our history and its role today. Thanks to Moscow's peace initiatives, the myth of a Soviet threat is gradually disappearing. It formed the nucleus of all anti-Soviet ideology. Today people are more inclined to believe Moscow than Washington. The Stern magazine recently published the results of an opinion poll which showed that on peace issues 49 per cent of the population are more inclined to believe Gorbachev than Reagan. Only 9 per cent stated their preference for the U.S. President.

The change in the public mood is, of course, bound up with the changes taking place inside the Soviet Union. But it seems to me that broad sections of the population in the F.R.G., and in the West as a whole, still have to grasp the depth of these changes, the international significance of perestroika and the development of democracy in the Soviet Union. That this has not yet been fully grasped is evident from the results of opinion polls in nine West European countries published by the British newspaper The Independent. In most countries Soviet foreign policy scored higher than its domestic policy. Incidentally, I learned of these results from Pravda, which reprinted the article from the British paper. Another sign of glasnost.

N.T.: Don't you feel that the forces in the F.R.G. who do not like this growth of sympathy for the Soviet Union are trying to mount a sort of ideological counteroffensive so as to renovate the much-faded enemy image?

Gerns: Yes, such attempts are being made. Some historians are trying to make the most of the fact that in the course of socialist construction, in Stalin's day, there were retreats from Lenin's methods as, for example, during the campaign for collectivization, and violations of socialist legality. They are using this to slander socialism as a social system. They even go so far as to make such monstrous claims that German fascism was a sort of reaction to "Asian Bolshevism." In other words, they are trying to shift the blame for the crimes of the nazi regime on to socialism. But such attempts arouse nothing but indignation even in capitalist circles. Today those who want to restore the enemy image are having a hard time.

N.T.: A discussion is now underway in our press on the causes for the retreat from Lenin's ideas and principles in the course of the building of socialism. Some people say that the past should be left alone. Otherwise we are only supplying our opponents with ammunition. What do you think?

Gerns: From my own many years of experience I would say quite definitely: the truth must be told. And the truth is made up of the historic successes, the great achievements of the Soviet people, and also of mistakes and problems. To talk only of the mistakes would mean distorting the picture. And conversely, if we remain silent about certain negative facts - sweep them under the carpet, as they say here - then that too distorts the real state of affairs. Moreover, we create new problems for ourselves. I am all for speaking honestly, as Communists should, about past mistakes and their causes. Perhaps it will disillusion some people. But in the final count, an open discussion is better for the Soviet Union, for us, and for the entire communist movement.

Bonn

Friendship born in space

Having completed their programme of joint research and experiments on board the Mir complex, the Soviet-Syrian crew comprising Alexander Viktorenko, Alexander Laveikin and Mohammed Faris has returned to earth, with Yuri Romanenko and Alexander Alexandrov remaining in orbit to carry on the mission.

I saw wild tulips in front of the first Hungarian cosmonaut's home. They looked exactly like those that bloom out in Baikonur every spring. When I told Bertalan Farkas' mother that, she looked at me with incredulity. Erzsebet Farkas plainly did not believe there could be anything in common between the far-off cosmodrome where her son had taken off into space and a tiny Hungarian village. However, as we said goodbye that evening she lingered by the tulips and regarded them with new interest.

Today thousands or perhaps even millions of people feel they are involved in space research in one way or another. As Sigmund Jähn, the G.D.R.'s first cosmonaut, told me in Star City, "one man cannot fly into space - a space flight is made possible by the efforts of thousands of people." A common cause brings people together. Cosmonauts themselves are an example of that. There are few of them so far, only about 200. But their influence on mankind is certainly tremendous, for they not only enrich it with new knowledge, but also teach it courage, selflessness and self-sacrifice.

This new profession is associated for many with the smile of Yuri Gagarin, universally recognized as a man of charismatic personality. "He has called all of us to space," Neil Armstrong, the first man to set foot on the moon, wrote in the Distinguished Visitors' Book in Star City. I am sure that Gagarin would have wholeheartedly supported the establishment recently of the International Association of Space Explorers. Cosmonauts of all countries have joined hands to ensure that space research promotes the prosperity of the "cradle of mankind" rather than bringing about its destruction.

The talk newsmen had with the Mir complex cosmonauts before the visiting crew's return to earth was in this sense most significant. Yuri Romanenko was asked whether he could imagine himself as the commander of a large international crew on a long space flight. It was not by chance that the question was put to him of all spacemen. Yuri Romanenko was involved in the preparations for the Soyuz-Apollo Soviet-American space flight, "played host" to the Czechoslovak cosmonaut Vladimir Remek on board the spaceship Salyut-6, flew with the Cuban cosmonaut Arnaldo Tamayo, and is now flying with the Syrian Faris. "A long flight to Mars, for example," Romanenko replied, "will indeed require an international crew working in close cooperation, I am certain of that. We have many excellent commanders, but I would feel privileged if entrusted with such a mission."

I was able to watch the preparations of all thirteen international crews in Star City, and I can testify that close friendships were started there, not only between the cosmonauts themselves but their backup pilots and their families as well. I found additional confirmation of that far from Moscow, in Guantánamo, Tamayo's home town. We met his family there and conveyed greetings from the crew. "We remember Yuri Romanenko very well," cosmonaut's mother Esperanza said. "He was our guest after his first flight, and we came to regard him as a member of our family right away."

On a different continent, another woman, Chultemiin Ichinhorlo, the mother of Mongolian cosmonaut Zh. Gurragcha, told us almost exactly the same thing. Asked how she would have felt about the backup pilot going into space instead of her son, the old woman replied with dignity: "Both of them are my sons."

Thousands of experts in many countries have now been brought together by space research.

In Wroclaw, Dr Zbigniew Kordielewski took me to the Solar-Terrestrial Connections Laboratory under the Polish Academy of Sciences' Space Research Centre of Kopernik Alley, on the Odra. Kordielewski's parents were astronomers, and his father had discovered dust satellites of the earth. Zbigniew himself and his wife took part in preparing the equipment for the Vertikal geophysical rocket. The launching of the rocket was not merely a scientific, but a family event, too: the Kordielewski's daughter, born at that time, was named Wertikalka.

In Paris, Professor F. Camboud came to a meeting with Soviet journalists direct from the hospital where he had found himself after a road accident. "I couldn't fail to meet with the representatives of the country with which we have numerous research links," he said.

He answered our questions and then, suddenly, hopped on crutches towards a projector. "Now I'd like to show you a few slides that mean a great deal to me." On the screen appeared a small settlement near Arkhangelsk, and a group of Soviet and French experts who were then working on the Araks project to create and study an artificial aurora borealis. Among them we saw Professor Camboud, Academician Roald Sagdeyev and researchers from the Space Research Institute under the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences.

I met Professor Stenflo of Sweden at a campfire near a Soviet cosmodrome just after the launching of the Intercosmos-16 satellite. While the crawfish we had caught together were boiling in a cauldron, the Professor said: "I had the good fortune to be the first Swede to work in your country under an exchange of experts programme. In the course of the programme I did some research at the Crimean astrophysical observatory, and I have now established close contacts with colleagues at the Physical Institute under the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences."

I think the words of Academician Boris Petrov, first Chairman of the Intercosmos council, merit serious attention. Shortly before his death he said: "The new successes achieved in space research really do promote human progress, and along with other factors, help us acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the planet and of the space around it, form a new scientifically-substantiated attitude to "the cradle of life," and make people everywhere aware of their primordial kinship, despite the force of the social antagonisms that separates and alienates them from each other."

Unfortunately, antagonism still makes itself felt. Breakthroughs in science and technology often not only bring mankind great blessings, but put it in mortal danger as well. This applies to nuclear research, to the achievements of modern chemistry and genetics, and to space exploration. The world is approaching the dangerous point beyond which the arms race may spread to outer space. So let us present a united front to this danger.

ANATOLY POKROVSKY

BRITAIN

Plans of the opposition

●THE LABOUR PARTY HAS GOT DOWN TO DRAWING UP ITS LONG-TERM POLICY.

Is the main opposition party in Britain really capable of making a bid for power in the near future and thus putting paid to the Tories' claims that having won the June election they would rule the country at least until the end of the century? If so, what does Labour intend to do in order to achieve its aim? Although Her Majesty's Opposition has plenty of time ahead, this question is now being carefully studied at the Labour Party's headquarters.

While trying to lift up their own spirits by calling the elections results on the whole encouraging (Labour this time won back about 20 seats in Parliament), the party headed by Neil Kinnock has nevertheless pointed out its own weaknesses. Specifically, it stresses the need to unite the two conflicting wings of the party around the organizing centre, strengthen discipline within the party and democracy. To this end, close associates of the Labour leader have seen to it that the outcome to the elections to the so-called shadow cabinet - the body that shapes the party's policy - is favourable for themselves. In the past, the party's right wing enjoyed the greatest influence in it. Out of the 15 MPs who make up the shadow cabinet this time most are regarded as allies of Kinnock and supporters of moderate Labourism. Noteworthy among them are Bryan Gould, Gerald Kaufman, who replaced the veteran Denis Healey, and John Smith, who is regarded as the future Labour leader.

It is expected that the new makeup of the party leadership will enable Kinnock more energetically to put into practice the second point of the programme which calls for consolidating the power of the centre and neutralizing the left wing. The latter's strong positions in another important party body - the National Executive Committee - has long been a source of worry for Kinnock. He is even prepared to carry out a reform of the leadership apparatus in order to strengthen his control over the National Executive Committee. According to some sources, he intends to install a two-tier leadership which, apart from members of the shadow cabinet, would give a bigger say to representatives of regional party organizations. According to the authors of this plan, such a structure would involve local Labour activists in the decision making process and thus provide them

It's about time I did something about that explosive situation in the Persian Gulf.
Cartoon by Vsevolod Arsenyev

with a new impetus for winning votes, especially in the northern counties of England, in Scotland and Wales.

Judging from the present makeup of the shadow cabinet, the Labour leadership has no intention of retreating from the main points of its programme, including its defence policy.

There were many claims that it was the non-nuclear principles of Labour's defence policy that frightened off a considerable section of the electorate. But apparently a big role in discrediting this programme was played by the conservative press, which portrayed it as nothing less than capitulation at a time of "mounting threat from the East." Labour has again declared its loyalty to NATO and said it would seek to revise the bloc's strategy in close contact with all of its members. It was stated, olbviously for American consumption, that the question of the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear arms from British territory would be decided only after consultations with Washington. At the same time Labour has reaffirmed its readiness to promote a "new détente" between East and West. **YURI KUDIMOV**

U.S.A. - JAPAN

Lured in the SDI trap

●JAPAN HAS OFFICIALLY JOINED THE SDI PROGRAMME.

The political decision was taken by the Japanese government last September. Why then the delay in signing the official agreement?

Tokyo realized that those NATO member countries who had been in a hurry to join the SDI programme lost more than they gained. The Japanese press repeatedly drew attention to an article of the agreement signed by Bonn which said that the patent rights to the results of joint research shall belong exclusively to the United States.

This problem is a particularly acute one in U.S.-Japanese relations. Japanese business circles regard the "star wars" programme above all as a source of new technologies, know-how and materials that could be used in civilian production. Less than one per cent of industrial capacities are presently working on military contracts. And even if this figure is increased, Japanese companies still stand to lose more than they gain. On the other hand, they would be happy to use technological innovations of the U.S. military-industrial complex to increase the competitiveness of their own goods. But that does not suit the United States, as it has a huge deficit in its trade with Japan.

It was this clash of interests that caused the delay in the signing of an agreement. Japanese business circles tried to bargain for U.S.A. concessions. But they failed. The SDI agreement signed by Japan on the whole repeats the West German formula - the patent rights shall belong to the U.S.A. Moreover, Japanese firms and organizations working for the SDI programme will have to take the strictest measures to preserve the secrecy of their research. Only part of the text of the agreement signed in Washington on July 21 has been published. Many of the documents signed are being kept secret. It cannot be ruled out that Japanese firms will get nothing at all from the joint research and development.

By signing the SDI agreement, the Nakasone government has opened the door of the mousetrap for Japanese firms and scientific research establishments. Having been tempted by the bait of "star" profits, they will be doomed to work without recompense for the Americans. Moreover, it will be the Americans who will control new Japanese technological developments. It is hard not to agree with the paper Daily Yomiuri that while the military target of the SDI is the U.S.S.R., its economic target is Japan.

The agreement was signed under unconcealed pressure from Washington. This included the hue and cry over the Toshiba affair (see page 28), the new trade bill approved not long ago by Congress which is imbued with national egoism, and the demand that Japan buy more U.S. weapons.

But unlike the politicians, the attitude of business circles in Japan to the SDI agreement is ambiguous. Such companies as Sony and Kyocera have not

A legend in his lifetime

In the life of every nation there comes a time when it has to choose: to submit, or to fight for freedom. These words were said by Nelson Mandela, who has decided to fight and has devoted his whole life to the struggle. Life offered him other choices, which would probably have tempted many. The eldest son of a Xhosa tribal chieftain, he could have followed his father as its leader. But he moved to a town and enrolled in college. His rebellious spirit made itself felt even then. For his participation in a student strike he was expelled from college.

Nelson moved to Johannesburg, where he worked as a miner. His contacts with African workers played an important role in shaping his outlook. He entered Witwatersrand University to study law. In 1952 he and his friend Oliver Tambo, now President of the African National Congress (ANC), opened a lawyer's office. Mandela was again faced with a choice: whether or not to take up private practice which would promise him a good life. But the young lawyers defended in court Africans accused of participation in the anti-racial movement.

In the 1950s the ANC worked for the abolition of apartheid by peaceful means and was legally recognized. Nevertheless, its leaders, including Mandela, were persecuted. Mandela was arrested many times and forced to discontinue his political activities. He was barred from speaking at meetings and publishing his writings. He was under constant surveillance of the police, who were present even at his wedding.

In 1960 the government banned the ANC and subjected it to severe persecution. Mandela said at that time: "We shall not submit, we have no choice but to fight back with all the means at our disposal and to defend our people, our future and our freedom." The ANC called for an armed struggle. Mandela had to go underground. For 15 months the police hunted for him. But their search was unsuccessful, for the people kept him under cover. Finally, on August 5, 1962, he was captured and sent to prison for five years. In 1964 a new case was brought against seven leaders of the ANC, including Mandela, and he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The authorities thought that Nelson Mandela no longer presented a threat to them. But they were mistaken. Even after putting the ANC leader in prison they did not have the peace and quiet they expected. The government has banned the mention of Mandela's name in the press, but it is never absent from it. Despite Pretoria's ban a campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela

tried to get contracts for participation in SDI research. Nissan and Nihon Denki have still to decide what position to take. "We see no special advantages in it," representatives of these companies, which are ahead of the Americans in technology, declared. Of course, the leading companies of the military industry are all for SDI. They include Mitsubishi Jukogyo, Mitsui Zosen, Ishikawajima Harima, Fujitsu and Hitachi.

And so Tokyo has crossed the Star Rubicon. Having signed the agreement on participation in the SDI programme, the Japanese government has in fact made it plain that it intends to continue the policy of militarizing the country. It has tied itself more closely to Washington's global nuclear strategy. Few people will be satisfied with the official declarations that Japan will not participate in SDI research connected with the use of the energy of nuclear explosions. This research will be conducted under such secrecy that it will leave no room for political dissent. The SDI mousetrap contains, as we can see, not only a technological bait, but a political one as well.

VLADIMIR OVSYANNIKOV
our own correspondent
Tokyo

SAUDI ARABIA

The Mecca incident

● ON FRIDAY, JULY 31, MORE THAN 400 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND HUNDREDS INJURED IN THE SPACE OF A FEW HOURS IN MECCA, ACCORDING TO THE MIDDLE EAST NEWS AGENCY.

In the world centre of Islam, the place where the prophet Mohammed was born, lived and founded his religion and where today its most sacred shrine, the Kaaba is, a bitter clash took place between Moslem pilgrims from Iran and other countries and the Saudi police. What happened between the followers of one and the same religion who had come for the traditional Hadj, the duty of every Moslem?

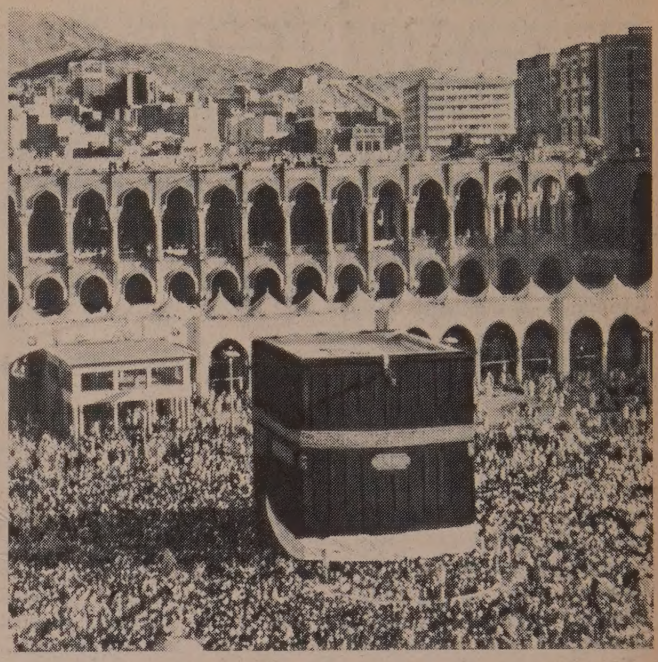
According to new agency reports, Iranian pilgrims, despite a ban by the Saudi authorities, sought to make use of the religious occasion to spread the ideas of the Iranian version of the Islamic revolution. The Hadj opens up wide opportunities since it provides favourable conditions for direct and free contacts between the pilgrims. This year, for instance, more than a million and a half people gathered there. Teheran had used these opportunities in previous years too, and had thereby aroused the displeasure of the Saudi leadership. The Shiite religious leaders in Iran had proclaimed that the political aspect of the Hadj was more important than its religious aspect and sought to turn Mecca into the world centre of the Moslems' struggle against their oppressors. They equipped their envoys with such slogans as "Death to the U.S.A.!", "Death to the U.S.S.R.!", "Neither East, nor West!" and so on.

This time the Iranian pilgrims linked their actions with the aggravation of the situation in the Persian Gulf. They called on those attending the Hadj to condemn the countries that supported Iraq in the war, including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Teheran radio announced that behind this Bloody Friday was a U.S. plot against Iran. Crowds of Iranians in Teheran, angered by the death of their compatriots, stormed the Saudi and Kuwaiti embassies. The French embassy was also attacked. Three days of official mourning were declared in the country. From Teheran come threats of revenge against the Saudis who "acted on instructions from Washington." Riyadh has rejected the accusation of the Iranian regime and put all the blame for what occured on the Iranian pilgrims. In Lebanon thousands of pro-Iranian Shiites staged a demonstration against the policy of Saudi Arabia.

It would seem that Islam, like any other religion, should promote unity among its followers. But time and again experience has shown that Islam is not a universal institution that knows no class divisions. We have now witnessed the consequences of attempts to combine religion with politics, to politicize Islam and Islamize politics. We are also witnessing the form an aggravation of the situation in traditional Islamic regions could take, regions where the United States is increasing its military presence.

YURI SEDOV



The Islamic shrine of Kaaba.

is being waged in the country. In Britain a record has been released with a song calling for Mandela's release. The record is banned in South Africa. Nevetheless, the song is invariably heard at funerals of victims of racist terror.

A whole generation of Africans has grown up in the South African Republic, while the ANC leader has languished in prison. They have never seen Mandela, never heard him speak. But they know him. He has become a legend in his lifetime, their banner in the struggle for freedom and equality.

The South African authorities thought that by jailing Mandela they could break his will and make him renounce his ideals. But what has happened? His wife and colleague Winnie Mandela said after one of her rare visits to her husband: He is just as determined as he was 25 years ago, his views and aims remain unchanged. The racist authorities offered Nelson Mandela his freedom in exchange for a promise to give up the struggle. He replied with an appeal to his people which his daughter Zinzi read out at a big rally in 1985. "I love life just as much as you do. But I cannot buy my life by selling my people's right to freedom. I am ready to die for this freedom should it prove necessary." Nelson Mandela fought for this ideal when he was free. He now fights for it in prison. His staunchness and courage instill in the fighters against apartheid faith in their victory and multiplies their ranks.

YURI BOCHKARYOV

EUROPE: THREE ZONES

Actually, I thought I would write a triumphant article: the Vienna meeting of the 35 countries participating in the Europe-wide process was scheduled to end on July 31. It was to have given a new impetus to this process at that fine, though difficult moment when it looked as if progress was being made in the field of nuclear missile disarmament. An impetus to all-European cooperation along all three lines, first and foremost, the line of military détente.

Unfortunately, this did not happen. Instead of the expected finish, the track was extended. No offence meant to the diplomats, including those from the socialist countries who exerted no little effort to make the meeting a success. The European public has every reason to feel displeased. Europe, which pioneered détente in the 1970s, should not slow down its political pace.

How long can we put up with such a situation? Patience in diplomacy is all very good. But there has to be a limit. Take, for instance, the Vienna talks on arms and troop reduction in Central Europe, in which 19 countries have taken part. They have been going on since the autumn of 1973 (setting a record for lack of results!).

For a long time the view has prevailed in the Soviet Union that each forum (how sick we are of that word!) is important, and attempts should be made to move ahead along every line. Détente has been compared to a multi-lane highway. If one lane is blocked, we'll move ahead in another one. Like any comparison, this one has its faults. Or haven't the diplomats from the 19 countries noticed that they are moving farther and farther away from the highway altogether? Let us agree on one thing - the experiment has not been a success.

So where do we have to look for success today? In order jointly to resolve the extremely complex problems of European détente, overcome confrontation or at least reduce its level, decisive steps are needed. As in the case of nuclear issues, a new thinking is required here.

That is why the Polish initiative - a comprehensive plan for reducing armaments and armed forces and strengthening trust in Central Europe - is highly significant and promising. Known as the Jaruzelski plan, its merits lie in the fact that it puts forward concrete proposals and takes a realistic overall approach to European problems.

What has been the situation up to now? It has become a habit within the framework of the all-European process to divide Europe as follows: the NATO countries, the Warsaw Treaty countries, and the neutral and non-aligned countries. I well remember how at the first stages of all-European cooperation, in Helsinki and in Geneva, such a division was frowned upon, especially by the neutral countries. Naturally, it would be better if all were equal. But, gradually, it became the norm - in Belgrade, Madrid and Stockholm. It was even formalized.

Poland's approach is different. It identifies three zones in Europe. The first is the zone of direct confrontation of armed forces (it includes the F.R.G., the G.D.R. and Czechoslovakia). The second is the region of Central Europe that surrounds the above zone and includes nine countries (the F.R.G., the G.D.R., Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Denmark). The third zone includes all of Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. These zones differ both in the quality and the quantity of military saturation. It is therefore logical that the approach to each should be different. As was noted in the Polish government's memorandum, "each element could be discussed and implemented separately and stage by stage, both from the point of view of territory and its content and participants."

An excellent idea! Indeed, why shouldn't we try and find solutions selectively and concretely? Why shouldn't we try and find solutions in the zone of direct confrontation, as suggested by the G.D.R. and Czechoslovakia in agreement with the West German Social Democrats? Why shouldn't the nine countries of Central Europe reach a consensus on the measures to be taken in their zone? Surely these countries, which have great historical experience and diplomatic traditions, have the right to think about their future.

I can hear the objection of the champions of the Atlantic alliance: one can't leave out the United States! One can't manage without the great powers, without those who possess both nuclear weapons and conventional armaments deployed on the territories of some of the Central European countries! But why can't one? As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, it has complete confidence in any negotiations that its allies might conduct with any NATO countries or with neutral states. If a final decision presupposes the participation and consent of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., why shouldn't they first listen to what Central Europe has to say?

Indeed it's high time to stop dividing countries into big and small, medium and small, especially in Europe. The Soviet Union has objected to this on many occasions. But apparently that is not enough. In Helsinki all were equal, and it was intended that they should remain equal. That is an axiom that requires no proof. Unfortunately, however, it remains to be put into practice.

The Polish plan offers such an opportunity. Similar opportunities are provided by regional proposals, such as those on making the Balkans and Northern Europe nuclear-free zones. But - could it be out of respect for or fear of the nuclear powers? - the countries have not got down to discussing their regional plans. It's true that the North European countries have taken some highly promising steps in this direction. Good luck to them!

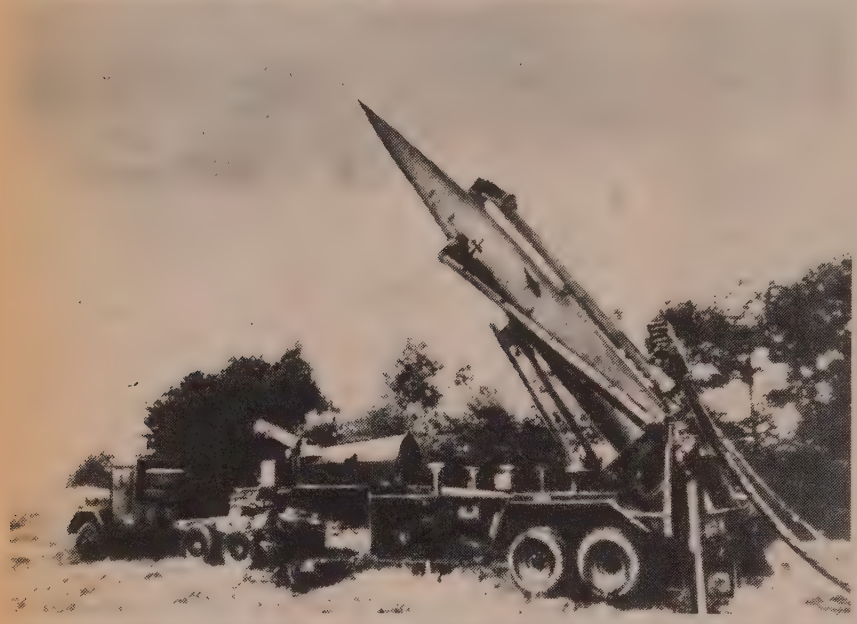
This would make it all the easier to solve problems of the third, all-embracing zone from the Atlantic to the Urals. For more than a year now the socialist countries have been waiting for a clear-cut reply from NATO to their proposals made in Budapest and reaffirmed in Berlin. Now it looks as if NATO has waked up and has made its proposals. We'll forgive Herr Genscher for his slight exaggeration when he said recently that it was none other than NATO that was bridging the gaps in the disarmament programme with its proposals for cutting back conventional armaments. If any gaps are being bridged, they are gaps in the West's position, and they are only being partially bridged.

But it's not who's first that matters. The main thing is that the level of confrontation in Europe should be reduced. And there Herr Genscher is right when he says that reductions in conventional armaments concern Europe most. Of course, at the Vienna meeting - now postponed until September 22 - some groundwork has been laid for an accord under which the conference on confidence- and security-building measures and disarmament in Europe will be continued after Vienna and talks could begin on conventional armaments and armed forces in the zone stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals. But so far it is only the groundwork. Let us wish the participants in the Vienna talks success in their difficult but important work.

Actually, I wanted to write about all the 35 countries taking part in the European process. In speaking of the whole, one should not forget each of its members. Obviously, one should be more attentive and responsive to the feelings and possibilities of each one.

LEV BEZYMENSKY

Double-zero option: a sampling of views



Prospects for a Soviet-American agreement on medium-and shorter-range missiles are being widely discussed in Britain.

There is one pipe to fill the bath, another to drain it. How long will it take for the bath to be full? A problem we all remember from elementary shool. It involuntarily comes to mind today when one follows the Soviet-American negotiations on medium-range missiles. When will the draft of a treaty be filled with concrete military-political content, if one side is doing all it can to fill it, while the other, as if testing its patience, is playing with the plug-hole.

The British government, one of Washington's closest allies, is participating actively in this hardly honourable game. Historically, London's stand on medium-range missiles developed as follows. Initially, its response to the Soviet initiatives was to shout about "Soviet superiority" in shorter-range missiles. Then, when Moscow included them in the negotiation package, London joined Bonn in calling for the exclusion from the deal of the Pershing-1A missiles stationed in the F.R.G.

Many of my British colleagues are now looking back at the past. At the April talks in Moscow hard on the heels of the Soviet Union's statement on its readiness to link medium- and shorter-range missiles, Eduard Shevardnadze and George Shultz did not, it is claimed, discuss the Pershing 1As. Therefore, in the past the Soviet Union had not objected to their remaining in the F.R.G. I, of course, was not present at the talks, but like all other sane people, I suspect that it was taken for granted that these covered all Soviet and all American nuclear weapons of this class deployed in Europe. The question of the Pershing 1A missiles was brought up in the West later, when they recovered from their initial surprise.

I spoke with the British physicist Owen Greene, national secretary of the Scientists Against Nuclear Arms.

"The Western governments," he said, "had hoped that the Soviet Union would not agree to the double-zero formula, but they miscalculated. It was then that they picked on the idea of excluding the Pershing 1As from the framework of the Geneva talks."

Another argument is often to be found in the British press: The Pershing 1A missiles were deployed in the F.R.G. in 1968 and pose no serious threat, since they are outdated. Hence this is more of a political or even a psychological question than a military one.

That, however, is not quite so. It is sufficient to recall the destructive power of each warhead. "With a range of 450 miles they (the Pershing 1A missile -Y.S.) .... are the only strategic West German weapons capable of striking deep into Soviet-controlled territory," the Guardian wrote.

It is interesting that on the eve of the general election early in June the British government announced its backing for the double-zero idea. It is hard to say what prompted this - a deliberate play for votes (opinion polls indicated that the majority of the electorate wanted the Geneva talks to succeed) or a genuine desire to promote progress at the talks. However, the Tory cabinet's policy shows that it does not want a reduction in nuclear arsenals. While voting with one hand for the double-zero option, Britain is continuing to deploy U.S. cruise missiles on its territory. The latest batch arrived almost simultaneously with the Soviet agreement to a global zero on medium- and shorter-range missiles. At the same time preparations are under way to implement the Trident programme.

A couple of days ago I met General Hugh Beach, in the recent past deputy commander-in-chief of Britain's land forces, and at present head of the Council for Arms Control.

What do you think, General, of the NATO position on the Pershing 1A missiles?

I hope this contradiction will be resolved. But you should understand that the West Germans, although it may be illogical, feel they should keep these missiles.

Don't you think that all the arguments of those who wish to retain the Pershing 1A missiles are contrived?

Yes, but that is psychological problem.

And what does the F.R.G. have to do with the American nuclear warheads for these missiles?

No logical answer is possible. But I think the Soviet Union should not insist on their elimination. The F.R.G. could be allowed to keep these missiles - they are very old and will soon be inoperational. In return, the U.S.S.R. could demand that the U.S.A. pledge not to modernize them, renounce plans to refit Pershing 1As and Pershing 1Bs, and scrap the cruise missiles deployed in Western Europe instead of turning them over to the U.S. Navy, as the American delegation in Geneva has insisted until recently.

My next question more concerns the British position. Don't you think that as a result of the elimination of medium- and shorter-range missiles from Europe and the 50 per cent reduction in Soviet and American strategic nuclear weapons, as agreed in Reykjavik, the British nuclear weapons will upset the rough parity that exists at present?

I can't help agreeing. The British Navy will get four submarines as part of the Trident programme. Each will have

16 missiles on board with eight warheads.

That makes a total of 512 warheads.

Yes, exactly. Of course, all four submarines will not be out on patrol simultaneously. Yet it is a formidable force. The Trident is a modern system with increased accuracy and a range of 5,000 miles. Consequently, the British nuclear force will become and important component of the East-West balance.

In any case, I believe a compromise should be sought, and as a first step, Euromissiles abolished. They are far too dangerous and complicate, if not make altogether impossible, the adoption of political decisions in times of crisis, in view of their very short flight time.

An agreement eliminating European medium and shorter-range missiles would help to promote trust. The Reagan administration will soon end. When it goes the idea of the Strategic Defence Initiative will collapse. And then we can count on real progress in reducing strategic arms.

There also seems to be progress at the talks on chemical weapons. That is very important both in itself and for drafting verification procedures. All that opens up real prospects for success at negotiations on conventional armaments.

In Geneva the two sides have been unable to find a common denominator on missile indices that are quite clear and have long been agreed on. Couldn't talks on the reduction of conventional armaments get even more deadlocked! Because in Vienna the talks deal with systems that are less destructive but much more complex and more tangled....

In so far as the reduction in conventional weapons is concerned, I support the ideas put forward by the Soviet leader Gorbachev. I believe they are quite effective. First of all the proposal to rectify existing imbalances by cutting the extras, not building up. The idea is very constructive, although I can't say it pleased everyone in the NATO leadership. Gorbachev suggested we decide what are the most dangerous offensive weapons and withdraw them from regions of confrontation. That means tanks and strike aircraft. Such a step could strengthen trust noticeably. The call to revise the military doctrines of the two military blocs and make them defensive also deserves the closest attention. If all this were put into practice, the situation would become more stable - neither side would have the ability to attack....

●

The general's comments reflected all the different nuances of the discussion now under way in British political circles over the Soviet-American agreement, which naturally affects all Europeans.

YURI SAGAIDAK

London

FRANCE

Monsieur Malhuret's heavy burden

ALEXANDER IGNATOV

The French company Degrémont is second to none worldwide in its own field - sewage treatment. Nor does it lag behind other companies in so specialized an area as the fight against the trade unions at its own plants. Having got rid of two delegates of the strongest French trade union, the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), the Degrémont owners have instituted proceedings to fire nine other delegates.

According to the Constitution, every citizen of France is entitled to defend his rights through the trade union of his choice. But the text of the Constitution may not be readily to hand on the desks of the company bosses. Or, for example, they may not have access to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted by the U.N. and ratified by France. Article 8 of the covenant sets out the right of trade unions to function freely. However, the Degrémont chiefs, looking at civil rights through a sewer pipe, might not have seen the document, although it has been in force since 1966.

In France there are quite a number of organizations that defend human rights. First of all, there is the State Secretariat on Human Rights set up by the Chirac government in March of 1986. Claude Malhuret, the present head of the secretariat, who was until recently leader of the humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders, might have given his support to the persecuted delegates on purely humanitarian grounds. It is indeed his duty, independent of his feelings, to stand on guard of the international obligations of his country and, indeed, of French legislation, which forbids the dismissal of employees who have been elected as trade union delegates.

Of course, the CGT leaders who are being fired by Degrémont are not former activists of the disbanded Polish union Solidarity and, therefore, deserve only the most cursory attention from the State Secretary. Nor have the officials of the mini-ministry on human rights responded to the troubles of the Degrémont group. Is this due to lack of information, error or accident?

According to CGT data, 15,000 activists of the trade union have been fired in France since 1983. These are 15,000 illegal acts in violation of the Constitution, the above quoted Covenant, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Official Paris has always declared the defence of human rights to be a mainstay of its policy. The special secretariat it founded has been charged with concern for human rights throughout the world, the socialist countries included. Is such attention to us justified?

There was a time when no shortcomings whatsoever in this sphere were admitted to in Moscow. Reasons for this existed, and continue to exist. Soviet society has guaranteed all its citizens social protection. It has done away with hunger and illiteracy not merely in theory, but in practice; it provides work and housing, free medical services and education. In capitalist society all this has still to be achieved.

The drawing up of the Helsinki Final Act, and the subsequent discussions in Belgrade, Madrid and Vienna on the implementation of the document adopted in August 1975 confronted us, too, with several real problems. Some of them were solved more or less efficiently, but slowly and inconsistently. The reform and openness now under way in the Soviet Union have accelerated the rectification of accumulated anomalies.

Legislative norms are being revised. New legislative bills are being widely discussed and adopted, as, for example, the new law on enterprises, which gives the working people the right to elect their own management, or the law on the right of legal appeal against the actions of the management.

Democratization has likewise involved elections to the Soviets - several candidates are already being nominated for one seat and their wants and demands discussed. The media now speak out on subjects discussion of which was formerly not accepted or "not authorized."

Many restrictions associated with leaving and entering the Soviet Union have been abolished or curtailed (1,700 people left the country in 1985, more than 5,000 in 1986, and over 8,000 in the first five months of 1987). A wide-scale amnesty has been granted.

Not all the changes and reforms have as yet been carried out. They will have to be fought for and argued over. But Moscow is open to discussion and ready to listen to the opinions of others. The main thing, however, is the tendency of

You won't find Monsieur Malhuret, the "great human rights champion," among these Isle de France workers.

TASS photo

Soviet society to criticize its own shortcomings, and try to correct them persistently, even in such difficult matters as the dramatic history of the resettlement of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 and the restitution of their rights, on which a high-level government commission is now working.

How, then, are we to judge, against the background of what is taking place in our own country, Claude Malhuret's statements about "thousands of political prisoners," "the reduction of the number of emigrants," or "the deterioration of the condition of the Jews and of people who are persecuted in the U.S.S.R. on religious grounds"? "Soviet strategy in the sphere of human rights," insists this French defender of human rights, "consists of the phased release of the most prominent dissidents and the wholesale imprisonment of the lesser known ones." "Since Gorbachev has come to power many more people have been incarcerated in the U.S.S.R. than are being freed, i.e., arbitrary acts are still performed as before."

What upsets the Parisian "humanists," it turns out, is not so much our shortcomings in the sphere of rights as their correction. They approve of neither democratization, nor openness, not reconstruction, Malhuret himself, incidentally, does not bother to conceal this. "Today my opinion is becoming more and more critical," he announces in the presss. Hence we see that what is important to him is not the situation as it really is, but confrontation with Moscow. And Monsieur Malhuret is directing his mini-ministry along this well-trodden path.

To justify the decision to interfere in the affairs of others, a theoretical basis has been built up in Paris by declaring a new "right to humanitarian aid." It sounds nice. Only they have failed to take into consideration that such a right should apply first of all in France itself. The responsibility will rest first and foremost with the government's rights-defending department - and not only in the case of the best sewage treatment plant in the world.

The French people still remember the assassination in 1985 of a CGT activist of Turkish origin, K. Ozgun. But then, as now, the police and private guards were used as instruments of terror - it is they who organize raids, assaults and battery, arrests, and even the shooting of protesting marchers and strikers.

It must be stated that in France not only are trade union rights being questioned, but also the basic political rights and freedoms. The majority election system distorts the representation of the various political forces in the parliament, especially that of the progressive forces. Procedural manipulations deprive the opposition not only of the possibility of influencing the decisions being adopted, but even of simply discussing them. Such a play at democracy does not worry Monsieur Malhuret and his staff.

Of course, the anti-democratic legislation appeared in France long before the rights-defending department was set up. Nor is the practice of violating, say, the right to hold peaceful demonstrations new. Let us recall the massive student demonstrations in November and December of 1986, when Monsieur Malhuret was already Secretary of State. The police beat up protestors, dispersed demonstrations, and hunted down participants in order to make them give false evidence, whether by force or blackmail. Dozens of young people were injured, hundreds arrested, and one - Malik Oussekine - was beaten to death by the police.

And what about Monsieur Malhuret? Was he worried? Did he intervene in the actions of the police? Did he stop the extremists and try to save the young people from savage reprisals?

Manifesting an "iron" firmness, the State Secretary in charge of human rights uttered not a single word. He said nothing and nor did he permit others to express their opinions. A genuine and modest "fighter" for the rights of the young! That "feat of omission" was by no means the only one to Monsieur Malhuret's credit.

In 1986 the ostentatious deportation from Paris of a large group of Malians who had no French residence papers created a major stir throughout Africa. Perhaps about a hundred people actually did deserve to be deported to their native country, but not in such a humiliating fashion: the Malians were chained to their seats in the aircraft that flew them home.

And not just Arabs and Africans are victims of repression, but even ordinary French citizens. According to EEC data, there are eight million poor people in France. Two million of them live in abject poverty, and one million are outside the social security system. The weekly "Témoignage Chrétien" has calculated that from 200,000 to 400,000 French people have no permanent place of abode. The state can offer them only 38,000 beds in shelters. From 2.5 to 3 million people are unemployed. Of them, 973,000 receive no benefits at all.

In the winter of 1986, under the Socialist government, five million francs were allotted for urgent aid to the homeless. A year later, when Malhuret came to office, only two million francs could be found. The budget of the Ministry of Social Security has been cut by a third. Where have these funds gone to? To increase the expenditure of the State Secretariat in charge of human rights - from 5 to 13 million francs. And also, apparently, for prison warders: the number of prisoners in the country has increased by 10.4 per cent in the last year.

This entire issue of New Times would not suffice to enumerate the situations that actually require the intervention of human rights champions. They include the increase in the number of crimes and acts of terrorism on grounds of racism and anti-Semitism; the deportation of political refugees and the granting of asylum to toppled murderous dictators, such as the Haitian Jean-Claude Duvalier and the Central African Jean-Bedel Bokassa; the propaganda of war and violence; the militarization of thinking, the discrediting of peace workers....

So, as we see, the human rights situation in France today is not very brilliant. Is it for this reason that force is being relied on? They have no time for justice. The fine slogan of the French bourgeois revolution of 1789 - Liberty, Equality, Fraternity - is still honoured, but only by lip-service and on the pediments of municipal buildings.

I cannot forget the sad words of the judge Jacques Bidalou: the 200-year-old slogan still has to be made a reality in practice. This the judge has learned from personal experience. Malhuret's political friends and associates "recalled" him from office for his too obvious sympathy for the oppressed. And they have added insult to injury by claiming that he is mentally ill.

Paris - Moscow

Sir Winston and citizen Gupta

"The dust of archives, you know, does not like vacuum cleaners."

The Chief Curator of India's National Archives looked at me apologetically or perhaps hopefully. He obviously enjoys his work. To brush off the dust from a time-battered volume is for him the same as to tear a page out of a book, to deprive an ancient relic of its natural companion. So I assured him that I would treat every speck of dust as carefully as the precious volumes which will lead me through the ages.

The first piece of information on the settling of the Ganges basin.... The beginning of ancient Indian statehood.... The Middle Ages, wars, wars.... Then comes the 18th century and the advent of the British... 1857 – the famous Sipai uprising that shocked Britain, the parent state.... 1896. Stop. Winston Churchill, a young officer of the colonial army, arrives in India. He is quartered with his regiment in Bangalore. Either because of the beneficial shade of the southern Indian garden city or the enforced idleness after an injury suffered by him during the landing in Bombay, Churchill began to read about India's history, the culture and customs of its people. He felt that he had understood the Indian soul.

Then come documents concerning Churchill the politician. His speeches in parliament made in the 1920s, 1930s and the 1940s, and they are all on one and the same theme: "British rule in India should be retained... Any changes would be a disaster for India... If granted independence, India will fall back quite rapidly through the centuries into the barbarism and privations of the Middle Ages...."

It is worth brushing off the archive dust from these pronouncements by Sir Winston in order to see better the contrast between the prophecies of this imperial politician who stubbornly clung to the "brightest jewel in the British crown" and present-day India whose pearl has for forty years shone in a national setting.

A meeting with destiny

In contrast to many developing countries where the propertied classes often exercise political power through military or authoritarian regimes, in India a bourgeois parliamentarian system has become firmly established. It was not just inherited from the British, as is said by some Western historians. The proclamation of bourgeois democratic freedoms written down in the Constitution and upheld by the working people, by all progressive, patriotic forces, reflected the national-liberation movement which was democratic in nature and extremely popular. The anti-colonial struggle was headed by the Indian National Congress party. What attracted the masses to the party was that, under the influence of the national-democratic forces within the party, personified by the father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi and the architect of modern Indian statehood Jawaharlal Nehru, it declared the creation of a society on a socialist model to be its aim.

At a Delhi exhibition.

TASS photo

When raising the national flag of independent India over the Red Fort in Delhi on August 15, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru pronounced words that have often been quoted: "Tryst with destiny."

Did the tryst took place for the nation which inherited from colonialism an awesome legacy of social and economic backwardness, with millions upon millions of its people suffering from poverty and deprivation?

World economic surveys published by international organizations today characterize India as a "developed developing country."

That India is a "developed" nation is borne out by the fact that it belongs to the top ten countries in the world in terms of industrial output, participates in the exploration of outer space and Antarctica, and carries out a broad national programme of peaceful nuclear research. India holds third place in the world in the number of scientists and technicians, after the U.S.S.R. and the United States. The achievements of Indian scientists in the most advanced fields of knowledge, for instance, in the field of laser and computer technology, put that country in the forefront of scientific and technological progress. At the cosmodrome in Shriharikota, from which rockets with satellites made in India are launched, I saw instruments carrying the trademarks of Indian enterprises only. In recent years the country has been gathering on the average 150 million tons of grain a year, and has become self-sufficient in food. While there are crisis phenomena in the economy of the capitalist part of the world, India's industry has been growing at an annual average rate of 5 per cent for many years already. Moreover, India is not burdened with huge debts to foreign creditors, as most developing states are today. But probably the most impressive result of India's independent development is the liberation of the popular masses of that great Asian country from the former downtrodden state, the rise among them of a feeling of national and human dignity.

Unfortunately, however, the second component of the phrase "developed developing country" continues to make itself felt. The inevitable difficulties of national development, connected with the strenuous effort to overcome the colonial legacy, have been exacerbated by contradictions generated by the growth of capitalist relations. Are they not responsible for the fact that to this day almost 300 million Indians still live below the poverty line? Nevertheless, 450 million men and women have already crossed this line. And this, one should remember, is equal to the population of the whole of Africa.

Political Ganges of the nation

The undeniable progress achieved in the forty years of independence is due to the course pursued by the Congress party which has been in power throughout this period almost without interruption. The present Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, has described the INC (I) as the

political Ganges of the nation whose channel was formed under the influence of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. The Prime Minister has said that Jawaharlal Nehru's visits to the Soviet Union had greatly influenced Nehru's thinking and this, in turn, had its impact on the course followed by the Congress party.

Indeed, as Indian historians have noted, after his first visit to the Soviet Union in 1927 Jawaharlal Nehru made an unambiguous choice.

He saw in the organization of the Soviet economy a model for India's future development. His dream that the state sector should become "the most important instrument" of India's industrial transformation has now come true. In 1951 India had only a dozen state enterprises; today the figure is close to six thousand. During the seventh five-year-plan period (1985-90) the money earned by the state sector will be used to reduce the number of Indians living below the poverty line from 37 to 23 per cent.

Despite the extensive development of the private sector the state sector remains dominant in the key branches of the economy. It accounts for 100 per cent of oil extraction and the mining of a number of nonferrous metals, 98 per cent of the mining of coal and about 80 per cent of steel production. Another major cause of social progress is that thanks to the state sector the Indian state remains relatively independent of the big bourgeoisie. Reliance on this sector enables the state to pursue an independent foreign policy. India is a leading member of the non-aligned movement, and its constructive, vigorous and peaceable course in the world arena has earned India high international prestige.

"We have to pay a price for our independent thinking on the foreign policy," Rajiv Gandhi noted recently. Irritated by the Gandhi government's independent course, the imperialist circles have in recent months intensified the attempts to destabilize the situation in the country. This time they resort to the tactics of "exposing," without any supporting evidence, unlawful deals which the government has allegedly made with foreign firms. These fabrications are backed by the bourgeois opposition. The purpose of the anti-government hysteria is to weaken the positions of the INC (I) and cast aspersions on the Prime Minister. In this complex situation a part of the population feels demoralized, and this enabled the bourgeois opposition to defeat the Congress party at recent elections to the State Legislative Assembly in Haryana, which became the eleventh state (out a total of 25) where the INC (I) is not in power.

The bourgeois opposition tries to interpret the Congress party's defeat in Haryana as a loss by the party of the national mandate to govern the country which it received at the general elections in 1984. A campaign to make the Prime Minister resign, to dissolve parliament and to hold early parliamentary elections is being waged. Some leaders of the bourgeois opposition (it has now become known from well-informed sources that they maintain ties with overseas special services) are trying particularly hard to discredit Rajiv Gandhi. They groundlessly accused him of being involved in the government's allegedly questionable deals with foreign firms. In short, the imperialist forces are relying on the reactionary forces inside India in their attempts to undermine or even alter the channel of India's "political Ganges."

Bhilai of the 1980s

H.K.L. Bhagat, a prominent member of the ruling party, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, told me in an interview:The achievement of independence was first of all a result of our people's prolonged liberation struggle, but many milestones in modern history, including this one, reflect the most important event of the 20th century - the revolution in Russia, whose 70th anniversary is being celebrated this year. It was that revolution which gave a powerful impetus to the national-liberation movement of the peoples of the East. That is why Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in a letter to his daughter Indira Gandhi: "The year you were born, 1917, was one of the most remarkable ones in history." The behest of India's first Prime Minister to develop

EXCLUSIVE FOR NEW TIMES

On Soviet-Indian cultural exchanges

Adjit Kumar Panja, India's Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, visited Moscow for the first time. His statements concerning Soviet-Indian cultural cooperation were as businesslike as the atmosphere now reigning in our country. The New Times correspondent who interviewed the minister heard not a single generality from him. Instead, Mr Panja spoke about problems which are still unsolved, and he spoke as one who was sincerely interested in their solution.

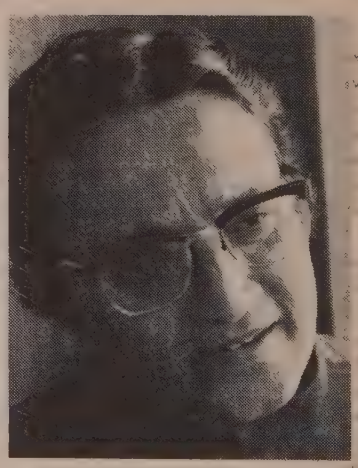
You were present at the opening of the Indian festival in the U.S.S.R. What are some of your impressions?

It is unlike any other festival we had before. Something new is taking place. Here we have people in the arts meet one another.This is very important. Despite all the changes that have taken place in our country, we retain our traditional respect for those who think and who express their thoughts in an artistic form.

This festival is by no means for a select few. It was intended as a meeting of the two nations. I'd like to emphasize that we have addressed ourselves to the people at large, to the grassroots, so to speak. Such things should not happen on some festive occasions only. When Mikhail Gorbachev visited India, the event got wide coverage for one or two weeks, and then publicity stopped. The same thing happened when Rajiv Gandhi visited Moscow. A great deal was written about Soviet-Indian friendship again, and then we forgot all about it, as it were. In this way we cannot get our message across to the people. Systematic work is needed....

You mean, we have some untapped resources in this field?

Quite right. We could set up a joint agency that would actively disseminate news of bilateral cooperation. Journa-



lists complain that we report even the contents of summit-level talks with great delay, and before the information reaches them, the media of an unfriendly country steps in with a distorted version of the events.

I remember when a satellite with the dog Laika aboard was launched by the Soviet Union many years ago, Indian papers carried a report to the effect that Soviet scientists were measuring the dog's pulse rate as part of a medical

friendly relations with the Soviet Union has become one of the cornerstones of our foreign policy....

The multifaceted ties of our two countries, based on the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation signed on August 9, 1971, concern not just the state agencies; they have become a vital cause of the Indian and Soviet peoples.The feeling of cordial friendship between them vividly manifests itself in the Festival of India that is now being held in the Soviet Union and is devoted to the 40th anniversary of India's independence. The Festival of the U.S.S.R., devoted to the 70th anniversary of the October revolution, will begin in India in November. It will be the first such event ever to be conducted by a foreign country in India.

The political essence of these two unique events, the prominent Indian public figure and journalist D.R. Goyal told me, is the mutual discovery of those elements in the culture of the two peoples a combination of which may become an effective means in the struggle for a world that is more sensibly organized, for the survival of human civilization....

According to Indian observers, during the conversations between Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi, who travelled to Moscow for the opening of the festival, much attention was given to ways of accelerating the development of cooperation of our two countries, of facilitating the implementation of the provisions of the Delhi Declaration the political and philosophical content of which, as Moscow and Delhi believe, should become a norm of international life.

A comprehensive long-term programme of scientific and technological cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and India was signed in Moscow. It provides for joint research and exchange of research results in the most advanced fields of knowledge. The broad scope of this programme led the Indian press to describe it as a turning point in the development of Indian-Soviet cooperation. This is all the more important for India since it is encountering Washington's reluctance in transferring advanced technology.

Never before in its relationships with the outside world has India experienced such humiliation as during the discussion with the United States on the question of buying a super computer, Professor Jaweed Ashraf of Jawaharlal Nehru University told me. The comprehensive long-term programme signed in Moscow opens up before the present generation of Indian scientists the possibility of conducting research in fields that were previously closed to them....

That is why the Indian press describes this programme as unprecedented. But nevertheless there are parallels. They go back to the 1950s.

Says the Indian journalist Girish Mathur: At that time the young republic, which was only beginning to develop its economy, asked the West for assistance. But it agreed to do so on terms that were degrading for an independent state. The Soviet Union came to India's assistance and helped to build India's first heavy industry plant - the metallurgical works in Bhilai. The present long-term agreement on scientific and technological cooperation can be compared to the Bhilai of the 1980s.

* * *

... From the National Archives of India, where I came across Churchill's unfulfilled predictions, it is ten minutes by car to Pragati Maidan, Delhi's equivalent of the Exhibition of National Economic Achievements in Moscow. Here, in this mini-India, along with exhibits about present-day India, there are many stands showing models of future projects. One of them is about a breath-taking plan for building an atomic plant to desalinate seawater and then pumping it across hundreds of kilometres to arid zones. I saw a young visitor attentively studying this project. I introduced myself and he told me that he was from Rajasthan, and works at an agricultural agency. His name is Gupta. It is a common name in India, as Ivanov is in Russia.

"Do you think the project will be carried out?" I asked him.

"Oh, yes, definitely it will."

LEONID ZHEGALOV
Our own correspondent

Delhi, August

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experiment. Well, I can tell you that every Indian heart beat in time with Laika's; literally all of us followed the flight. Today Soviet space experiments are much more complicated and exciting, but they don't get much of write-up. Are we getting accustomed to them, or what?

On the other hand, quite a few Soviet publications are being distributed in India.

That's correct, but they are distributed in the big cities mostly: Delhi, Calcutta, Madras, Bombay. They do not reach the masses outside these cities. Unfortunately, not every schoolteacher reads them. I wish all our workers and peasants got them.

We are also to blame for the shortcomings in information exchange. We put out thousands of publications to be distributed in the U.S.S.R. They include speeches by our statesmen and works of poets beginning with Tagore. However, I haven't seen any of them in Moscow's bookshops. Why don't they reach you? It is probably our fault, mostly.

Both the U.S.S.R. and India face quite a number of complicated economic, political and social problems. So should we put so much effort and means into promoting cultural exchanges?

I am convcinced that cooperation in the humanitarian sphere is a matter of prime importance. It is easier to solve other problems if people's outlook, their way of thinking, is based on humanism and is imbued with spiritual values, respect for thought, for the human personality, for the culture of your friends.

Now we take the human factor into account in everything we do....

It cannot be otherwise. I'm sure that if man takes precedence over everything else, all other problems will be solved automatically. India has always believed in this. Man has intelligence, but he also has a soul which is a source of all his actions, good and bad. Humanism must predominate in the soul, this is the most important thing. The atomic bomb has been created by people. But if conscience awakens in everyone, nobody will invent new lethal weapons, nor even for money.

In other words, everything conducive to the spiritual development of man is in the final analysis highly practical?

Spirituality does not mean religiosity. For instance, I do not follow any religion, but I do believe. I believe in the humanization of mankind. This is a long process, but we Indians do not doubt it will be a success in the long run.

The phrase "new political thinking" is popular in the today's international political vocabulary. In what ways does this new thinking manifest itself in Soviet-Indian relations?

It has existed for a long time as far as India and the U.S.S.R. are concerned. But glasnost (Mr Panja pronounced this word in Russian - **V.K.**) is a new development indeed. To me it means openness, above all openness to other cultures and other traditions. Openness of cultural exchange is excellent. But openness can be used not only by friends. Some would like to take advantage of the openness policy to do us harm. So it is our common task to protect friendship and understanding between the U.S.S.R. and India from their encroachments.

Interviewer: VLADIMIR KULISTIKOV

TAKING UP A POINT

THE OPENNESS AND FRANKNESS WITH WHICH WE SOVIET PEOPLE, COMMUNISTS, DISCUSS OUR DOMESTIC PROBLEMS CALLS FOR SIMILAR FRANKNESS WHEN IT COMES TO INFORMING US ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT.... SOVIET PERIODICALS DEVOTE NO SPACE TO IT, WHICH IS UNFORTUNATE. THE ONLY REASON FOR THIS, AS I SEE IT, IS THAT SOVIET WRITERS ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS THINK THAT PERESTROIKA DOES NOT APPLY TO THEM. **IGOR KONDRATYEV** Kuibyshev, U.S.S.R.

A factor of unity

VLADIMIR RUBTSOV, associate editor of the journal Kommunist, replies:

I hope you'll forgive us, Comrade Kondratyev, for having picked out just this reproach from your long letter. The reproach is indeed a just one. The information published in our press often leaves the reader with many unanswered questions. Thus, although the working-class movement is growing, the communist parties in the leading industrialized capitalist countries are losing votes. The number of working-class parties is increasing, but there is a lack of unity of action among them. There are now international associations of various parties, ranging from socialist to the extreme right, but Communists still have no worldwide organization, and it has been a long time since they held joint discussions of the urgent problems facing them. In a number of countries there exist parallel communist parties, but our readers are not quite clear as to what the differences between them are and what has caused them to split up. Many of those interested in the history of the communist and working-class movement know little about some of its periods – say, about the role the Communist International has played in it.

As a rule, insufficient information and inadequate explanations give rise to rumours, often fantastic ones, and in the end things are seen in their wrong perspective. Whatever problems the Communists are faced with today it will certainly be easier to overcome them if the communist parties unite and make fuller use of their collective wisdom and experience. You are not alone in thinking so, Comrade Kondratyev; this simple, logical and natural line of reasoning is shared by many other readers, young and old, Soviet and foreign, by all those who cherish the common and noble ideals of our broad international movement.

There is, perhaps, only one point on which I do not quite agree with you. I don't think you should dramatize the fact that our writers on international affairs are lagging behind those journalists who openly and frankly discuss in our periodicals various aspects of Soviet Party work, the state machinery, the country's social and economic development. It is not a matter of their not being open or frank enough, of their being unwilling or unable to change their attitudes. Although the need for a new way of thinking has been largely prompted by international problems, a solution to these problems requires that commentators on international affairs begin perestroika by looking into problems at home. Strict self-criticism and sober-minded self-assessment are a component part of a new way of thinking. In this far-from-ideal situation, which bears the imprint of the complex historical period we are living through, we simply must learn to distinguish between those aspects of world and domestic problems that have been aggravated owing to our own shortcomings, and those aspects whose development is beyond our control.

The spirit of self-criticism, an atmosphere of openness and democratization – all this has enchanced the prestige of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of Communists throughout the world, and improved the prospect for achieving unity and solidarity of the international communist and working-class movement, which has not yet fully disclosed its potential as a real alternative to the capitalist system.

The absence of large-scale joint actions has long been worrying many rank-and-file Communists and party leaders. Many parties favour the idea of convening at an early date an international communist conference on ways of safeguarding peace and security. Some parties, however, take a different view. In their opinion, one should not hasten to hold such a forum because not all the conditions for it are ripe. A more realistic approach, they reason, would be gradually to prepare for this forum, through broad and multilateral preliminary consultations. It has been suggested that a good beginning could be made through contacts between the leaders of communist and workers' parties who will be attending the coming celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution.

But it is clear even now that relations between communist parties of different countries have livened up. Intense exchanges of views on a bilateral and regional level are under way, and international theoretical seminars and symposiums are being held under the sponsorship of research institutes. Theoretical and political publications brought out by Communist Parties carry joint discussions of the crucial problems facing the movement.

Not everything is going smoothly as yet, of course. Many participants in discussions have difficulty overcoming their long-standing reserve, their habit of sticking to prepared texts instead of freely expressing their thoughts as they arise.

Life itself has shown the growing importance of voluntary and equal cooperation between Communists of all continents. The forms of this cooperation, both on a bilateral and multilateral level, can and should be varied and imaginative. What's more, they should serve the national interests of every fraternal party and the common interests of all Communists throughout the world. ■

An act of great injustice

In 1942 the well-known American authoress Pearl Buck noted that Japan, following Hitler, hoped to take advantage of racial prejudices in the United States. U.S. behaviour towards its own coloured people, she said, is the criterion by which it will be judged by its enemies and allies.

On February 19, 1942, two and a half months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Franklin D. Roosevelt signed presidential decree No. 9066 authorizing the Secretary of War and his representatives to move any U.S. citizen or foreigner from areas that had to be secured against enemy spying.

All U.S. citizens of Japanese descent were prohibited from living and working on the west coast. The army was ordered to deport them, and Congress approved the order. The U.S. Supreme Court said that exile was a permissible measure but that the internment of obviously loyal citizens would be unlawful.

The West Coast military commander, Lieutenant General John DeWitt, saw no problem here. "A Jap is a Jap. It makes no difference whether the Jap is a citizen or not," he said. DeWitt stated his views in more detail in his official report. The Japanese race is an enemy race, he said, and though many second- and third-generation Japanese were born on U.S. territory, have U.S. citizenship and have been Americanized, they have not become less loyal to their race as a result. DeWitt ended up his report with this chilling conclusion: the very fact that no act of sabotage has so far been committed is worrying and only confirms the idea that such acts will be committed.

FBI director Edgar Hoover pitched in by saying that no Japanese could be trusted. FBI agents and U.S. army units surrounded the areas with a predominantly Japanese population. An estimated 120,000 Americans of Japanese extraction were moved to settlement centres. But the fine-sounding name should deceive no one. The centres were in fact concentration camps, which the Europeans know only too well. In these camps, fenced with barbed wire, the resettled Japanese families lived for three years in hastily put up barracks roofed with tarred felt. The 23,000 Japanese living in Canada were treated even worse. They were also moved to concentration camps, but the men were separated from their families.

For a long time many families could not return to normal life. Their neighbours continued to look upon them with suspicion. Since the government had considered it necessary to isolate these people, they thought, they must have been guilty of some offence.

Such views were openly expressed despite the fact that no instance of disloyalty on the part of Americans of Japanese descent had been recorded. A volunteer Japanese unit was formed at the end of 1942. It was named Nisei, meaning a second-generation Japanese, or a Japanese who was born in the United States. As was later acknowledged by U.S. Congress, soldiers of that unit fighting in Europe were awarded a record number of decorations. Besides, thousands of Japanese proved their loyalty to the United States by valiantly fighting against the emperor's army in the Pacific. All these people went to the frontline straight from behind barbed-wire fences, with their families remaining in the concentration camps.

A concentration camp for Americans of Japanese descent.

Photo from Der Spiegel (F.R.G.)

At the same time considerably larger German and Italian communities were left alone. Incidentally, there were no plans for mass internment of American citizens of German and Italian descent living in Hawaii, in close proximity to the theatre of war.

Why was the blow levelled against the Japanese who had settled in California and neighbouring states on the west coast?

The reason was publicly disclosed only 40 years after the war. It lies in hostility towards the Japanese, engendered by racism which has deep roots in American society. Presidential decree No. 9066 was preceded by a long anti-Japanese propaganda campaign and a series of anti-Japanese laws. The Japanese were hated and despised on the west coast even 40 years before Pearl Harbor.

The multinational American society, a conglomerate of immigrants from many countries, became nevertheless affected by racism, directed first against Negroes and later against coloured people in general. In California and other western states, Japanese immigrants, mainly peasants, were not allowed to buy land. At the beginning of this century the California legislature passed a law which barred the children of Americans of Japanese extraction from attending public schools. To some extent, this hostility was explained by economic reasons: the local farmers regarded Japanese peasants as rivals. But the main slogan was the struggle against the "yellow peril." Newspapers called the Japanese "little yellow people who will steal our green California." In 1941 the Japanese became the fanatically hated enemies. Notices posted up in all drugstores in white neighbourhoods announced the opening of a "hunting season," when an unlimited number of licences would be issued for the shooting of Japanese.

In 1983, in a report to Congress by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians it was pointed out that racial bias, war hysteria and unsound political leadership had led to an act of great injustice against the Japanese.

It took the commission two years to arrive at this conclusion, after studying the relevant documents and hearing the evidence of 750 witnesses. And it took Congress nearly 40 years to decide to set up the commission. It has long been proposed that the historical injustice be redressed, that an apology be made to the Americans of Japanese descent, and compensation be paid to them. What prevents Washington from doing that? Preoccupation with other problems or lack of political courage? Or is the hunting season for people not yet over?

LEONID MLECHIN

A STATE FARM GOES SELF-PAYING

YURI SHEVCHENKO

They say that Henry Ford I and his heirs after him, had no private office in Detroit. The founder of the automobile empire was in the habit of turning up in his factories unexpectedly, so that the workers should never know exactly where he was. The purpose evidently was to keep everyone on his toes, to discipline the work force. And there was a psychological and economic motive behind it, for Ford never did anything without having a practical reason for doing it.

Vitaly Garin lives on the other side of the globe from Detroit, in the Russian village of Makeyevo, on the border between the Moscow and Ryazan regions, and knows very little about Ford. But he too does not have a private office. The director of the Krasny Kolos (literally: "Red Ear of Grain") State Farm has made it a rule to divide his working day among the dairy farm, the field crop growers, the garage and the construction site. Psychology has nothing to do with it, neither has discipline; Garin simply finds it easier to work that way, in contact with people. The best way to locate him is to be on the lookout for his Niva car - he is at its wheel till late at night making the rounds of the various sections and fields of the farm.

You have to take a close look at his face to realize that this man in a neat white jacket, with his athletic build and light step is all of fifty years old and that he is a farmer. Seventeen of these 50 years have been devoted to the Krasny Kolos. The state farm has 4,300 hectares of ploughland, 1,000 hectares of pasture land and hay fields. It has a work force of 580, a livestock farm with 5,000 head of cattle; it owns 98 trucks and passenger cars and more than a hundred tractors and grain-harvesting combines.

"A regular armada!" was the director's surprising comment at the quantity of the farm machinery. "Don't know how to get rid of some of it."

Formerly, before the restructuring, I had never heard a farm executive say anything of the kind. On the contrary, they always complained of a shortage of machinery and tried to get as much of it as possible - at state expense, of course.

"Aren't you exaggerating when you say you want to get rid of some of it?"

Garin laughed. "Wait," he said. "Let's take a trip to the fields."

However, he took me to a quite different place, to the village of Pecherniki, over a badly-paved road, past quiet ponds and copses. Pecherniki is the second biggest village on the territory of the state farm, and strictly speaking it is not a village at all; it is more like a suburban settlement. Its streets, lined with cottages, each with its garden allotment, lead to a small square. Here Garin stopped abruptly.

"A few years ago it was all log cabins here," he said.

The Grebenshchikovs

He jumped out of the car and headed for a tall house with wood carvings on the eaves and around the windows. From within came the sound of hammering. Building work was still going on.

"What will this be?"

"A beauty parlour."

"And that one?" I pointed to the next house equally decorative in style and, judging by the gleaming windows, already finished.

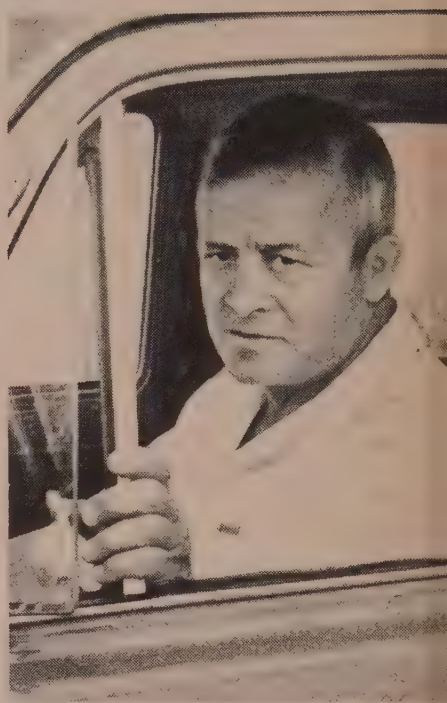
"That's our sauna. Farther on, there will be a club. Over there, a shop. Have we a library? Of course we have, but it's at Makeyevo, next to the school. Let's go...."

The car leapt forward and we were on the road again. The director seemed to have deliberately chosen a route that would give the visitor a good view of the neat brick houses of the farm workers, and a panorama of their orchards and truck gardens. I could not help noticing the absence of smoke from the chimneys, though it was lunchtime; I also noticed the gravel paths, the wire-fenced poultry runs, the neat stacks of freshly-cut hay.

"You probably expected the village to be a mess of manure and mud? No, we had enough of that! A general meeting of the farm personnel decided that the keys of the new houses would be given only to people who would be sure to keep the place in proper order, hardworking people."

"You actually took such a decision?"

"Why not? We don't trust a new house to everyone...."



VITALY GARIN

"Trust or sell? They are cooperative houses, aren't they?"

"So they are. Suppose we look into one of them? Take your choice."

We pulled up beside a cottage belonging to Sergei Grebenshchikov, a truck driver. He was out, but his wife, Yelena, a calf-herd and the mother of three small children with a fourth on the way, was at home. The house had three large rooms with heating facilities and two unheated summer rooms. There were carpets on the walls and the furniture was modern. Under the house was a concrete cellar. In the kitchen was a Czech gas range and beside it the traditional Russian stove.

"We don't heat it," Yelena said. "It just makes the place cosier, and we're used to it."

"How much did this house cost you?"

"Five thousand rubles with the outbuildings."

I remarked that it surely cost much more, especially considering the garden plot a good quarter-hectare in size, the brick cattleshed and the barn.

"Right you are," Garin nodded. "These houses cost the state farm ten thousand rubles. But we sell them to our workers at half price, repayable in instalments."

"Does it pay the state farm to do that?"

As if he had not heard my question, Garin turned to Yelena.

"Look, you and your husband are young folk, both about 30. You are good

workers, and full of life. Have you no desire to move away from these backwoods to the city?"

"Are you serious?" Yelena laughed. "Leave this place? Why should we?"

"There's your answer," Garin said to me.

The state farm went over to cost accounting and self-financing two years ago. The practical experience gained by this and other farms helped to lay the groundwork for the reform now under way in agriculture in the Moscow area. In these two years the Krasny Kolos has built several dozen houses like that of the Grebenshchikovs in two sections of the state farm. I forget to say that the couple also have several calves. True, they don't keep them at home but nearby in a special barn for the cattle belonging to state farm workers; it is more convenient to tend the cattle jointly, besides which the place has a feed kitchens and hot water. The state farm charge a small fee - not in money but in meat - for the use of these facilities.

As for money, the Grebenshchikovs' monthly income amounts to 700 rubles. The average earnings in the state farm are 350 rubles a month.

Everyone on contract

Many think highly of the system of self-financing that operates at the Krasny Kolos state farm. The principle of making the farm pay for itself has become its muscle and sinew, ensuring its stability, the growth of labour productivity and a decent income for the workers. Last year the farm netted 1,800,000 rubles in profit. Part of this money was deposited in the bank to be drawn on as needed, part was used for the improvement of two villages, the building of a gas main, for the expansion of the farm, and for a kindergarten.

"On the face of it, it all looks clear and simple," Garin said. "You go over to self-financing and everything goes smoothly. But introducing it was anything but easy. What were we up against? The resistance, sometimes unwitting, on the part of individuals. How did a state farm machine operator work formerly? He tried to run up as many kilometres as possible, to use as much fuel as he could - after all, he was paid for the number of kilometres he covered."

"What has changed?"

"The main thing - the principle of distribution. Nowadays it is the end product of our labour that is distributed - according to the labour invested by each, taking account of the amount produced and what it cost to produce it. In other words, subject to distribution in the state farm as a whole is part of the gross income, which, as we know, is determined by the value of the end product minus the cost of producing it. The less the cost the more accrues to us. This simple arithmetic is, strictly speaking, the economic approach. Today there are no longer any 'jobs that pay' and 'jobs that don't.' "

"Then it is not only the end product that is decisive?"

"Not only, even though we talk about payment according to the end product. What is important is the cost of that product. You can get ten thousand kilograms of milk per cow per year and not bother about using feed economically, you can get record yields of wheat at the cost of inordinate use of manual labour, fertilizers, etc. But who needs such yields and such productivity? How can labour be justly remunerated on such a basis? Today we are going over to payment for labour according to a fixed rating."

"What is that rating in agriculture?"

"It is a strict criterion established through calculation of the amount of wages per one thousand rubles of the marketed product. It is a stable rating that does not change from year to year. Note the word 'marketed.' The greater the amount of marketed output the bigger the wage fund. This rating is a stimulous to sound economic performance."

"But doesn't it radically alter the attitude to the plan?"

"Exactly. The rated methods of planning force an economic unit to strive for the maximum plan. There you have one of the main elements of our perestroika."

"What about collective contracts?"

"Let me cite the example of a field crop team. In the non-chernozem zone it produce one crop a year. The farm administration concludes an agreement with it stipulating what and how much it should produce during the season. At the same time a definite allowance for expenditures is fixed. Every month a minimum payment is made - an advance on the payment due the team for the end product."

"How are the expenditures controlled?"

"When a tractor driver, for instance, gets a supply of fuel he writes out a check for the respective sum and turns it over to the office. He does the same thing when his tractor needs repairs. The procedure is the same for all expenditure items. The checks go to the bookkeeping department and at the beginning of the next month the tractor driver knows how much he has spent and how much of his allowance he has left. The check form of control over current expenses is not just a powerful lever of economic accounting but also, if you wish, instruction in the ABCs of economics, it teaches people to keep an account of what they spend. Socialism means keeping accounts, Lenin said. Here's another example. Formerly the machine operators of Mikhail Mishin's team used to load mineral fertilizers manually. As soon as the check system of controlling expenses was introduced the men themselves, without any orders from anywhere, designed a machine for loading fertilizers. They used parts from old machines that had already been scrapped."

"So the main principle of the collective contract is remuneration of labour according to the end product, minus the cost of producing it?"

"It is the principle of the family contract as well. We are introducing it mainly in livestock breeding. It is of advantage both to the individual and to the state farm as a whole. Labour productivity grows by leaps and bounds. Take the Samsorins family, for instance. At their request, we gave them 320 calves to take care of. Formerly six people tended a herd of that size. We supplied the Samsorins with feed and repaired the barns. Their job was to see to it that the animals gained weight. That is what they are paid for. And although they do not use a single extra gram of fodder, their calves weigh more than the calves in the main livestock section of our farm. They plan their workday themselves and the amount of labour they spend to achieve a 100 kg gain is only a third of the average for the state farm as a whole."

"What is the attitude of the other state farm workers to the Samsorins?"

"What do you expect them to feel about people who earn three times as much as they do? At first there was envy and even anger. Money-grabbers, they were called. But after a while people saw that the Samsorins were simply honest, conscientious workers, who earned every ruble they received. Some began to think - 'why can't we do the same?' Now we have a good many such sub-contractors. We are thinking of extending the family contract system to the field crop growers as well and to the maintenance personnel."

"Wouldn't you say that the family contract system is rather like farming in Western countries?"

"They do have something in common. There is nothing wrong in making sensible use of other people's experience. But there is a fundamental difference here. In the West the farmer works (or thinks he does) for himself and only for himself. His farm is a mini-component of capitalism. Our family contract system, while borrowing from the capitalist farmer his high standard of professionalism and his economic approach to every item of expenditure, works both for the individual and for the state farm as a whole. After all, the family gets its assignment and pay from the state farm, works to fulfill the state farm's plan and raises state farm calves."

"Would you say that the combination of collective and family contracts in the context of cost accounting is today the only form of organization of agricultural work?"

"No, I would add also the individual contract, although we do not have it yet. I, as the director, must also be 'profitable,' I ought to have definite

contractual relations with the work force, work for it on contract. If I am able to run the farm successfully, if I don't run it on the rocks, they'll reelect me."

A street scene on a state farm.
Photo by V. Panov

Looking for a market

I asked Garin whether he ever gets tired.

"I certainly do, but not because of the work load I carry. Formerly, too, I had to be on the go from dawn till dusk. Today the nervous strain is greater than in past years. The economic reform is by no means a smooth road. There are plenty of potholes."

"Shall we have a look at the potholes?"

"With a newsman, by all means! See that truck out there? Yesterday it returned from town with a load of spoiled potatoes fit only for cattle feed. Those are potatoes we grew ourselves, dug up, sorted out and took to town. All our labour (and not only ours - many state and collective farms constantly experience the same thing) went for nothing. What's the use of storage facilities that allow the fruit of our labour to go to rot? Those responsible should be prosecuted! That's the first pothole - the departmental barriers between the different branches of agriculture."

"Have you complained to the district agro-industrial amalgamation (RAPO) about those potatoes?"

"Complain to RAPO? I don't want to complain to anyone. I want to work normally and not see vegetables rotting - on the fields because the storage bases don't take them or because the shops don't have the transport facilities. RAPO, sometimes, is the second pothole. Worse than the first."

"But RAPO is your district boss? Isn't it?"

"What do I need a district boss for? To tell me when to sow and when to harvest? I know that myself, after all I am a graduate of an agricultural academy."

"What benefit would you wish to gain from the district amalgamation? What would you pay it for if it were self-supporting?"

"What the countryside needs is up-to-date technology. If RAPO would take care of that, it would be invaluable. Another problem is the removal and transportation of organic fertilizer by machine. Many of the cattle barns are so filthy it's a disgrace, heaps of manure everywhere. This valuable fertilizer is removed haphazardly, by hand."

"Any more potholes?"

"Plenty. For instance, I have money lying in the bank. I want to build a good vegetable storage facility, but the bank won't release the money, knowing that I have no way of getting the necessary building materials at present. And that is true. The same applies to asphalt - you can't get any. And I would like to see all the state farm roads paved as well as any in Europe. And in time that's how it will be.... What else would I wish? I would like there to be an agrocomplex in place of our state farm that would take care of everything - the production, storage and processing of agricultural produce. And the marketing as well. I need a market!"

"What prevents you from taking your produce to the market?"

"It doesn't pay at present. It's not profitable to send a truckload of vegetables to a bazaar somewhere hundreds of kilometres away. The petrol would cost more than the net profit. And there is no place to deliver small quantities as the crops ripen."

"What is the solution?"

"We need a shop of our own. We're already building one in Zaraisk, the district centre. We'll supply it with vegetables, fruits and meat. And we're planning to start turning out canned goods too."

"But for that you will need more people, won't you? Where will you get them?"

"I promised to take you out to the fields, now is just the time...."

Plain commonsense

Raising behind it a cloud of dust, a grain harvesting combine was moving slowly across a wheatfield. Garin caught up with it over the fresh stubble and signed to the operator to stop.

The combine was of an unusual type for these parts - it had been made in the German Democratic Republic. The state farm has two of them and another ten Soviet-made Nivas.

"How much grain did your machine bring in last season?" Garin asked the operator.

"About two thousand tons," the man replied, jumping down onto the stubble.

"How much would you have harvested with a Niva?"

"I ran a Niva for three seasons. It never topped 700 tons."

"I paid forty-seven thousand rubles for that machine and I don't regret it," the director said, when the machine operator had returned to his cab. "With it one man can do the work of three! You asked where I could find the people for vegetable-growing and the cannery. That's where I'll get them.... I'll get rid of all the machinery not worth keeping - most of it is in that category at present. We have sections of the livestock farm where 25 calves are tended by the same number of people as is needed in other sections to tend 520, thanks to the machinery.

"To carry your idea further, one might say that a few years from now you will be faced with the problem of how to keep your workers occupied."

"We have already reached that stage. Last year we went over to two-shift work in the basic branches, including livestock raising. The calf-tenders and the milkmaids now have a seven-hour workday. But there is no problem of excess free time. Every family has its own garden plot and livestock, besides the haymaking to attend to, so there's plenty to do at home!"

"What are your main objectives in the next year or two?"

"There's a great deal to be done. The chief thing is to double or treble labour productivity, to increase the grain yield to six or seven tons per hectare from the present 4.1, to increase the annual milk yield to 6,000-8,000 kilograms per cow as against the present 5,000. We also need to increase the protein content of cattle feed, and that means reorienting mainly on the more nutritive crops, like clover. To provide the majority of the workers with their own house, garden and livestock. And enable them to earn more."

"How much do you yourself get a month?"

"No more than the machine operators and dairy workers. The same 350 rubles on the average. If the state farm exceeds its targets, sells more produce, I get a bonus. It comes to about 400 rubles."

"Are you satisfied with that?"

"Of course not." ■

Strategy of reform

What should be done to move the national economy from the extensive to the intensive road of development and bring the structure of economic management into line with the new economic concepts that are being gradually introduced in the republic? These and many other questions were discussed on July 28 and 29 in Sofia by a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party.

Numerous attempts to solve these most formidable problems have been undertaken in Bulgaria in recent years.

The process of vigorous restructuring was started by the decisions of the February 1985 and January 1986 plenary meetings of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party. At its 13th Congress in 1986, the party formulated the main provisions of the policy of integrated restructuring. Such crucial legislative acts were approved as the Labour Code, the Declaration of the National Assembly on the placing of socialist property under the management of work collectives, the provisions on economic activity, main guidelines for setting up associations of a new type, restructuring the banking system and further developing the cooperative movement.

The country took a bold and resolute step by abolishing sectoral ministries. They have been replaced by industrial associations, joined voluntarily by enterprises which reserve the right to withdraw from them. What is gained by this? The staffs of the associations are much smaller than those of the former ministries, while important decisions are adopted democratically - by a majority vote (not less than 51 per cent) of the members of the Board of Directors.

It goes without saying that in such an immensely difficult endeavour as restructuring the economy, and moreover restructuring it in a drastic and it can even be said revolutionary way, one cannot do without a comprehensive concept. Let us recall Lenin's words that "anybody who tackles partial problems without previously settled general problems, will inevitably and at every step 'come up against' those general problems without himself realizing it. To come up against them blindly in every individual case means to doom one's politics to the worst vacillation and lack of principle."

And the latest plenum of the BCP CC discussed questions associated with the working out of a general model for the republic's future development, a model that would make it possible to avoid "vacillation and lack of principle" and serious errors. The participants studied the Main Guidelines for the Concept of Further Building Socialism in the People's Republic of Bulgaria, submitted by the General Secretary of the BCP CC, Chairman of the republic's State Council Todor Zhivkov. This document, to quote the Bulgarian leader, is an attempt to give an answer to the key questions of society's development.

"The uniqueness of the present situation demands not just the perfection of the model that has so far existed, not a simple development of its possibilities, but a qualitative transition to a model meeting the new realities in the world, in socialist countries and in the People's Republic of Bulgaria," say the Main Guidelines. "This model should be directed at attaining major objective of historic importance - in the foreseeable future fully to bring forth the essence, advantages and attraction of socialism on Bulgarian soil. It should create conditions for developing our socialist society as a self-administering system. Thereby the aim is being set of giving greater scope for the operation of such levers that will overcome the administrative approach, raise the role of millions of people as subjects of management and further develop the process of converting power on behalf of the people into power of the people."

As they start the radical dismantling of everything that obstructs rapid advance the Bulgarian Communists are taking into account the experience of fraternal countries, especially the Soviet Union. It was stressed once again at the plenum that the decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress, the January and June plenary meetings of its Central Committee are of historic importance not only for the Soviet Union but also for all the fraternal countries, including Bulgaria, and that the BCP and the CPSU were in full agreement on the necessity for a profound renewal at the present crucial stage.

How do Bulgarian Communists see the way of its further development?

In the document the question of self-government is called the general question of the theory and practice of building developed socialism. The transition to self-government is determined by objective laws of social development, demands to democratize it further, and the need to solve problems of social and economic development with the active participation of work collectives.

Self-government

As was noted at the plenum, the existing structure of the political system has increasingly come into conflict with the new laws governing social development. In practice this means that bureaucratism is strong and that social deviations exist. The bureaucratic stratum is relatively small, but in its striving to retain its status it inflicts considerable damage. The principle of self-goverment is called upon radically to change the situation so that the apparatus will serve society and the people, and be under their control.

Self-government in Bulgaria, the document says, required a revision of the structure of state power. The Main Guidelines propose to restructure the activity of the National Assembly, the State Council and the Council of Ministers. Thus, the National Assembly and its deputies should become representatives of self-governing communities and its commissions should function on a permanent basis. It is not considered expedient to retain in present conditions two separate bodies - the State Council and the Council of Ministers. It is intended to create a fundamentally new body possessing executive and administrative functions in relation to the main questions of administration. The question of forming a national association of commodity producers is to be submitted for discussion. Its members will be the new associations and independent economic associations.

Understandably, the plenum did not bypass such an acute problem as resistance to restructuring. In the past, too, the Bulgarian press noted that this implied resistance by various categories of people - from those who still sincerely believe in the correctness of the old methods of running the economy to certain middle-level officials who understand that self-government will deprive them of power, of the possibility of commanding an army of administrators

and disposing free of any controls of millions of leva of state and public funds. At the plenum this middle echelon was described as the one that makes the biggest "contribution" to the failure of important party initiatives, and their depreciation on their way to the working people, the broad popular masses. It was also pointed out that impunity for failure or poor performance can only be done away with when this echelon is turned from an administrative body into a body for the self-government of work collectives and work communities.

The new conditions also require the formation of a single centre of state power to work out the plan and monitor its fulfilment with the help of economic methods, levers and means.

It is noted in the Main Guidelines that the time is now ripe for enlarging districts and turning them into new structural units - regions, and for reassessing the present number of communities.

Some changes are proposed also in the formation of the self-governing bodies. In particular, it is proposed to expand the democratic basis of elections and openness, and to perfect the competitive system and ensure the replacement of officials. The electoral system will change substantially at all levels with two and more candidates contesting each seat. Self-government should guarantee rigid control of guiding bodies and officials from below - by the electorate and work collectives.

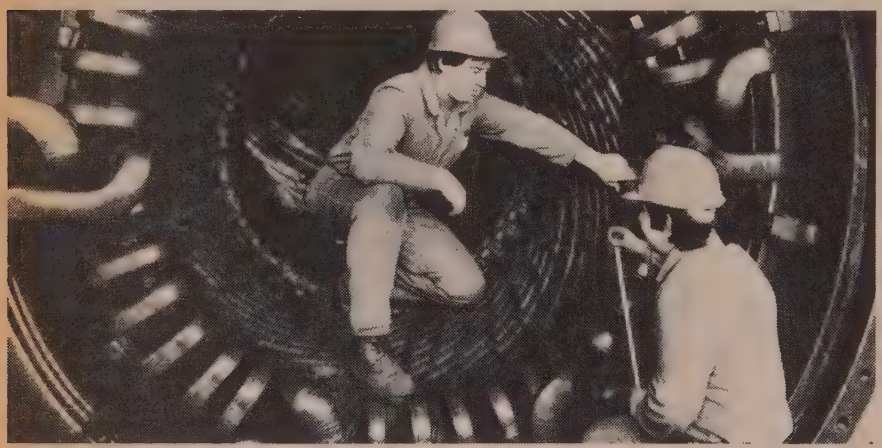
Man is both the end and the means

Man is Both the End and the Means

Under the present conditions it is especially important for every worker and farmer to realize and genuinely feel that they are the masters of their plant or farm. It is intended to expand and deepen the forms of socialist ownership. Thus, cooperative ownership will receive what can be described as a new lease of life, the scope of mixed ownership - national and foreign - will be expanded, and the development of individual labour activity will be encouraged.

The question of distributing power in society stands separately: the centre of gravity will shift from the top to the base of the pyramid of society's superstructure. The unity of the economic and political power of the work collectives will, it is believed in the party's Central Committee, strengthen the workers' sense of being genuine masters and change their mentality and psychology. An owner endowed with power will be directly interested not only in his work and the work of his collective but also in the correctness of decisions adopted at any higher level. Collectives will acquire the right to influence the staffing of higher bodies.

The Main Guidelines for the Concept of Further Building Socialism in the People's Republic of Bulgaria also provide for a number of other reforms. This concerns first of all an improvement in the banking system, which should play an active role in the scientific and technological retooling of the economy. The population's interests and purchasing power will be taken into consideration in the elaboration of the new concept of prices and pricing.



The coal-burning Maritsa-Vostok-2 thermal power station, Bulgaria's biggest, is being expanded. Photo: the stator being fitted into a new generating set.

BTA-TASS photo

As it was noted at the plenum, the development of the integrated concept of further socialist construction is subordinated to one main objective - the benefit of man.

Special attention is given to questions of social equality and social justice. The plenary meeting declared its support for a further implacable struggle against negative phenomena, and violations of order and discipline. This applies first of all to officials of every rank. "The negative personal example of these officials, the discrepancy between words and deeds inflict irreparable damage on socialist morality and the education of the people," the document says.

The BCP is proceeding from the premise that the planned changes can be accomplished only if the creative potential of each individual is brought into play, and for this reason the restructuring should be a cause of the entire nation.

Perestroika begins in the Party

Bulgarian communists say restructuring in the work of the party itself is a compulsory precondition of all reforms. At present many bodies of state power, it was noted at the plenum, have become simple appendages of corresponding party bodies. The entire decision-making mechanism is based on this. Usually decisions are adopted by party bodies, while state bodies execute them. In practice the party apparatus is omnipotent in executive activities as well, issuing directives daily and hourly, while bearing no responsibility for errors and miscalculations. "This reality is extraneous both to the Constitution and the party rules," the document says. Such a practice in effecting the "guiding role of the party" leads to an omnipotence on the part of party bodies and officials that it is impossible to control. A number of leading party officials have arrogated the right to interpret laws as they feel fit, violate them with impunity and manipulate the party organizations concerned. They become the source of fallacious methods that inflict serious damage both on the party itself and the cause of socialism. All this inevitably leads to distortions within the party itself. The fact that the party has been elevated to the rank of the principal wielder of power, which contradicts all conceivable principles, enables some of its officials in the centre and at the provinces to feel that they can do whatever they want with impunity, and that they are beyond reach if they violate established regulations and laws."

The plenum expressed the issue as follows: as the Marxist-Leninist vanguard of the people, the Communist Party is responsible for determining the general course of society and the formulation of the main directions of the country's socio-economic development. The party's guiding role manifests itself in consistent pursuance of personal policy: the conduct of purposeful educational and ideological work in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism among the population, especially the younger generation, and the creation of the ideological climate necessary for the successful attainment of the party's aims.

The plenary meeting unanimously adopted the Main Guidelines and Todor Zhivkov's opening speech, and decided to discuss the theses on the further building of socialism in Bulgaria at a national party conference in December of this year.

ANDREI SMIRNOV
TASS correspondent
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Sofia

SHANGHAI IMPRESSIONS

MIKHAIL YAKOVLEV

Shanghai, China's largest and most populous city, emerged in the mouth of the Yangzi, on the site of a fishing village, a few hundred years ago. It was not until relatively recently, however, that it began to flourish and became an important trade and industrial centre. Under the British-Chinese Nanking Treaty of 1842, China's first unequal agreement with a foreign state, Shanghai and five other cities were opened to English traders. In time the city turned into a paradise for all kinds of shady operators out for a quick profit.

Today the factories and plants of this huge city with its 12-million-strong population account for about 11 per cent of the country's gross industrial output. The port of Shanghai handles more than a third of the cargoes delivered to China by sea.

Shanghai products are distinguished for their high quality, as a rule, and are found in practically all corners of the P.R.C.

The city is famous for its revolutionary traditions. The first constituent congress of the Communist Party of China was held there in 1921. Many people of the older generation remember how enthusiastically the news of the Shanghai proletariat's revolutionary actions was received in the Soviet Union. Lu Xin, the founder of modern Chinese literature, lived and worked there.

There are other chapters in Shanghai's history, too. It was from there that the signal for the notorious "cultural revolution" was given on Mao Zedong's instructions.

I have been to Shanghai repeatedly since the late fifties. A short time ago I revisited it with a group of Soviet journalists on the invitation of our Chinese colleagues.

Economic reconstruction

The hard-working city awakens early - at around 5 a.m. Its state, cooperative and private industrial plants, shops, large companies, banks and government institutions employ hundreds of thousands of blue- and white-collar workers. In the daytime, at peak hours especially, the city is like an enormous beehive, literally throbbing with life. The streets hum with tens of thousands of cars and trucks, Japanese-made for the most part, as well as buses and trolleybuses, crawling along in an endless flow. Traffic jams occur now and then, and in the meanwhile cyclists skilfully manoeuvre their way between the cars, somehow managing not to be run down. To make life easier for cyclists, the municipal authorities have set aside special bicycle lanes, fenced off with wire mesh or low stone barriers, on the busiest thoroughfares.

Concentrated in the city are metallurgical, engineering and instrument-making factories, shipyards, chemical and electronic plants and textile mills. In the current seventh five-year-plan period (1986-90) plans are afoot to develop the ultramodern industries there - microelectronics, laser technology, bioengineering, robotics and the production of the latest materials - at an accelerated rate.

The Jianan Shipyards marked their 125th anniversary two years ago. The first Chinese steamer was built there. Now every second new ship in China slips down the ways of the Shanghai shipyards.

We arrived at the shipyards just in time for the launching of a new ocean-going ship. In an enormous ship-section production department Meng Huei, Deputy Director of the shipyards, explained to us, to the deafening staccato accompaniment of pneumatic hammers, that the department was going to diversify into making equipment for the future Shanghai metro and for a bridge across the Huangpu River.

"In this department," Meng said, "sixty Soviet experts helped us in our work."

Shanghai has achieved impressive successes in science and engineering. A 300,000-kW water-cooled steam-turbine electric generator and a large electron microscope have been built to its scientists' designs. Insulin has been synthesized there from the pancreas of an ox.

The city has joined actively in the drive for reconstruction.

"Over the past three years 900 million dollars have been invested in the reconstruction of industrial plants," Liu Zhenyuan, Deputy Mayor of Shanghai, told the delegation of Soviet journalists. "This has enabled us considerably to improve the quality of our products. In the course of the economic reform we have given factories more extensive rights, thus stimulating them to more vigorous activity. We are simplifying the factory management system and increasing the managers' personal responsibility.

"Previously," the Deputy Mayor went on, "everything was planned by the superior authorities, the size of profit included. Factory directors had no involvement in marketing at all. The new structure of production emphasizes market-oriented management. We intend to put an end to wage levelling. Previously, pay did not depend on whether you had fulfilled your assignment, and now the better you work, the more you get. Factory managers now have a free hand in distributing the wage fund."

Export orientation

Shanghai is entering a new stage in its development. An economic region comprising the city proper and the provinces around it - Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangxi, Fujian - is being formed. According to the Xinhua agency, the region is to play an important role in the gross production of industrial and farm produce, in product supply to the market and in hard currency earnings through export. A special agency has been set up under the P.R.C. State Council to manage the Shanghai economic region.

Shanghai is expected to win back its old position as a major financial centre of the Far East. The city has 900 financial institutions. Along with branches of the People's Bank of China and branch banks, offices of French, British and foreign banks function there. An inter-bank short-term credit market and a securities exchange have been opened there.

Shanghai's links with the outside world are growing fast. The city authorities have been granted extensive powers to sign agreements with foreign companies on setting up joint ventures with foreign capital invested. More than 220 such joint ventures have emerged, and nearly 100 of them are already producing; a foreign capital investment totalling over 1.9 billion dollars has been

In the port of Shanghai.

Photo from National Geographic (U.S.A.)

attracted to industry. The biggest mixed enterprises are Chinese-American (aircraft construction) and Chinese-F.R.G. (auto manufacture).

According to official sources, more than 250 foreign companies opened offices in Shanghai towards the end of 1986, half of them Japanese, and the rest, U.S., West German, French, British, Australian, etc. The Soviet shipping company opened an office there last May, and a Soviet consulate was established in December 1986.

As they invite foreign capital investments, the Shanghai authorities seek to build industrial plants fitted out with modern equipment so that their output can be exported and earn the hard currency the country needs to buy new equipment and technology.

"Five thousand of our city's state factories," Liu Zhenyuan pointed out, "are producing for export. In 1986 they earned us 3.5 billion dollars, or an eighth of the total hard currency income from Chinese export."

On the subject of the history of mixed enterprises in the P.R.C., Liu Zhenyuan traced it back to the Chinese-Polish shipping company. But that was not entirely accurate. Much earlier, on March 27, 1950, the U.S.S.R. and the P.R.C. signed an agreement on establishing, in what was then Xinjiang province, a number of Soviet-Chinese joint-stock companies: Sovkitmetall (prospecting for, surveying, mining and processing nonferrous and rare metals), Sovkitneft (prospecting for, surveying and processing oil, gas and oil by-products). Mixed Soviet-Chinese companies were set up with the partners cooperating on an equal footing. Besides discharging their productive functions, the companies were obliged to train technical and executive personnel from among Chinese citizens.

A few years later the Soviet Union handed all its rights in those joint-stock companies over to China. "Drawing upon the rich experience of the Soviet Union in economic construction, and using first-rate Soviet equipment," the newspaper Renmin ribao wrote on October 13, 1954, "we succeeded in promptly getting under way and expanding the factories that comprised these companies. These modern factories played a positive role in the rise and development of our country's economy. The imperialists often use the export of capitals to colonial and semi-colonial countries as a form of economic aggression against these countries. The investments made by the socialist Soviet Union in the said companies pursued entirely different ends - namely, to offer us the money and the equipment we needed to develop our mineral wealth. The Soviet side has helped us to get joint-stock companies going and to train personnel, shared its experience, and is now handing over to us its stake in these companies, i.e., the factories that were components of them. The factories are becoming Chinese state property."

Problems still awaiting solution

Shanghai's shopping centre is crowded and full of colour. It extends along the west bank of the Huangpu, a tributary of the Yangzi, and includes Nanjinglu and Huaihailu streets, lined with numerous high-rise buildings, department stores, restaurants and a large number of private shops - products of the economic reform. Neon lights and modern advertisements flare up in the evening. The shops are full of goods for every taste, need and purse.

Unemployment has been eliminated in Shanghai, which is a major achievement.

"We in Shanghai are now even short of labour," Liu Zhenyuan told us. "All those who want to work have no problem finding jobs. Recently we've made a practice of hiring help on contract."

According to the city statistical board, incomes in Shanghai have increased at a rate of 8.4 per cent a year over the sixth five-year period (1981-85). We were told, however, that it was an average figure, and that the actual income growth figures differed substantially from one social stratum to the next. Price adjustments depending on the market situation, and the cancelling of uniform state prices of food have naturally had a beneficial effect on the incomes of suburban truck gardeners, well-to-do peasants, and workmen who depend on both land plots and sidelines for a living. However, the welfare standard of citizens on fixed wages is not rising particularly fast.

Shanghai is confronting other problems as well, the keenest one being municipal transport. In Shanghai there are two square metres of pavement per person as against 22 square metres in, say, London. There are about three million bicycles and 176,000 cars in the city. At peak hours, the number of passengers packed into buses amounts to 11 per square metre of standing place.

"Once we tried to squeeze 22 shoes into such a space, and failed," Liu Zhenyuan laughed.

What is the way out, and how are the streets of Shanghai to be made less congested? The authorities are considering building new bridges, under- and overpasses, and a metro, although all this will cost a fair amount. The nature of Shanghai soil is such that laying each metre of metro will cost an estimated three times as much as in, for instance, Peking.

Another problem of no less importance is housing. Today there are about two square metres of living space per person in Shanghai. In the last five-year period 20 million square metres of housing were turned over for tenancy, and in the current five-year period another 24 million are to be built. Private housing construction is being encouraged.

This year, the municipal authorities are allocating most of their funds not to industrial but to housing construction and to the development of the municipal transport system. There are plans to build under- and overpasses in the centre of the city, and a pedestrian bridge across the Huangpu more than two kilometres long, break the ground for the metro, and expand the railway station so that it can handle up to 72 passenger trains a day. Foreign capital investments will be encouraged in every way so as to expedite the attainment of these objectives. More than a billion dollars is shortly to be invested in the development of Shanghai, and in particular, its infrastructure.

As we left the megalopolis, we had warm feelings for its residents and wished them every success.

Shanghai - Moscow

NO LONGER UNCONCERNED

More About Bridges for Peace

From our special correspondent
ALEXANDER PUMPYANSKY

What I like about the American peace organizations, whether SANE or Freeze or the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament, is that their actions are concrete and their thinking is in terms of humanity as a whole.

They have no powerful organizational apparatus, nor do they enjoy the backing of the state (on the contrary, they are at logger heads with the state machine). Therein lies their weakness, of course - the odds are far too uneven. But therein also lies their strength - in their spontaneity, sincerity of feeling, their genuineness of their initiative and enterprise. After all, nobody compels these people to join Freeze or SANE, it would be easier not to concern themselves with causes. But the point is that these are people who are no longer unconcerned.

Anne and Dale

Let me tell you about another couple of our New Jersey hosts - Anne and Dale Bussis with whom we stayed in Hopewell. Two elderly but absolutely indefatigable people belonging to that section of Princeton intelligentsia for whom the meaning and the joy of life consist in intellectual courage, which in turn means openness, non-acceptance of any kind of blinkers and constant readiness to battle against ignorance, untruth, injustice whether in academic or public life. Material wealth is not their coveted goal but merely a means of overcoming all that might distract them from their purpose.

I confess that the first thought that occured to me was none too creditable: "Was not a two-storey house rather too large for two people? But there was always something going on in that house, people were constantly dropping in - not to be entertained - but for lively discussion on the widest variety of subjects. It was, as we soon found, an open house in the most literal sense of the term. On our very first morning Anne said: "If your get back before us, you'll find the side door open..." That evening, over the traditional "nightcap" I asked why the door was left open. She told me that once she and her husband returned home after being away for some time to learn that a tragedy had happened on their doorstep: there had been a fire next door and one of the sufferers had tried in vain to get into their house for water, bandages or medicine. Anne can never forgive herself at the thought that a life might have been saved had she left the door open. Since then the Bussises never lock the door.

But even without visitors the big house is never empty for Anne and Dale. For them it is full of voices. The walls of Anne's room are covered with photographs - the faces of children, teenagers... None of them resembles the parents. They had six adopted children, each with his or her own tragic story. One evening Anne gave me the outlines of these stories which as a rule began with drama - breakdown or family life, imprisonment or even the death of the natural parents, the physical and mental trauma had been gradually mended in this house. Now all the children were grown up, flown from the nest, all with families and homes of their own.

Once, as we were about to retire for the night, as usual well after midnight, Dale said: "I won't be seeing you tomorrow morning, I'm leaving early for Washington." He was going there, he told us, to see a senator.

Shortly before our arrival, Dale Bussis had returned from Nicaragua where he had spent 10 days helping the inhabitants of Las Calabasas, about 30 miles from Managua, to build new homes, as part of a Habitat for Humanity programme. Now, together with seven other members of the group, he wanted to give the senator from his state an eyewitness account of what he had seen.

What were his conclusions?

"The country is very poor. That's the first thing you learn when you get to Nicaragua. It's a country at war... I think that probably accounts for some of the problems they have. I think that for a country at war it is remarkably at peace with itself... It's not our democracy, but I think it is a far cry better than anything they've ever had. And the people think so. I think we're making such a mistake in funding the contras. We're creating a war instead of trying to prevent one."

It was again late at night when we next saw Dale.

He looked very glum. The senator, being "too busy," had delegated his secretary to receive the group. "But we'll get to him!" Dale vowed.

Moreover, the 59-year-old Dale Bussis plans to go back to Nicaragua, this time for a longer stay.

Organizations with one idea

The birth, life and death of American peace organizations are as a rule centred on one watchword, one idea expressive of an urgent public need.

The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador is campaigning under the slogan "A Million Voices for Peace: Stop the U.S. War in El Salvador."

The National Pledge of Resistance circulates a leaflet saying "Stop the Lies about Central America!"

Telling me about his own organization, Robert Moore, executive director of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament, proudly recalled that 1,300 New Jersey people had taken part in the famous million-strong rally in New York's Central Park in 1982. This gave me an idea of the dimensions of the American peace movement: the Princeton, New Jersey, Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament represents only one-thousandth of it.

The Coalition offers all who are prepared to participate a wide range of political actions: organizing petitions, lobbying elected office-holders, peace vigils, and other forms of demonstrations. Every action is well-thought-out in every detail. Take letter campaigns, for instance. Whom to write to? Only to the two senators from your state or the member of the House of Representatives from your constituency (the other public servants will take no heed to your voice). When to write? Two weeks before the adoption of an important decision in Congress. How to write? Briefly and clearly, in your own name and not in the name of the organization. And the motto of the letter campaign is: "You can stop nuclear war in 15 minutes a week."

While we were there a concerted campaign was being conducted to "contact Senator Bill Bradley to support binding legislation to force compliance with the SALT II and ABM treaties." The logic of the campaign is simple and understandable - the treaties are important. Although they have not brought about a reduction in nuclear arsenals, they have raised a barrier to the arms

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For previous articles in this series see our issues Nos. 29, 30, 31.

build up and prevented further escalation: only on the basis of these treaties will it be possible to reach agreement on far-reaching reductions. Congress alone can stop the U.S. administration from violating the treaties. In this respect the stand taken by the Senate is particularly vital. The vote of Senator Bradley (a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, with the reputation of a moderate) could be decisive. So far the senator has declined to support the bill on SALT II and whether he will support legislation relating to the ABM treaty is still unknown. Hence: contact Senator Bradley and persuade him to support the relevant legislation. Here is his address: send him letters and telegrams (a 20-word telegram will cost you 4.50 dollars). Phone him at this number....

The concerns of the city fathers

Rutherford split the atom by bombarding its nucleus with free electrons. The organization Local Elected Officials for Social Responsibility has decided to split the U.S. military budget by bombarding it with letters. It is collecting the signatures of mayors and city councillors to a petition to President Reagan and members of Congress.

"Dear Mr President and Members of Congress," it reads. "Since 1978 military spending has escalated relentlessly. The military budget now stands at 300 billion dollars per year, fully one-third of all federal spending. The true price of all this is evident in America's cities and towns, where homelessness and poverty grow, where our schools and schoolchildren suffer and our streets crumble....

"We want military spending cut. We want it cut sharply. We want it cut by 60 billion dollars or more. And we want it cut now.

"We want these funds re-directed to meet urgent domestic needs - deficit reduction and revitalization of America's cities, towns and local economies."

In the City Hall of Paterson, members of the City Council Merrilie Jackson and the Rev. Albert Rowe, both blacks, gave us a picture of the city's problems. Paterson is a living symbol of the history of the American industrial revolution, its hopes and disappointments. The first embodiment of Madison's ideas about the march of progress, once the "silk capital" of the United States, a magnet that drew immigrants from the textile centres of the whole of 19th- and early 20th- century Europe, a volcano of strikes sung by John Reed and Upton Sinclair, Paterson is today a medium-sized working-class city beset by the classical problems, unemployment, the ulcers of the ghettoes and ethnic conflicts.

"These are offensive rocks, and these are defensive rocks."

Cartoon from a book put out by the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament (U.S.A.)

There may be different views on how to cope with these problems. One thing, however, is clear: they cannot be tackled with bare hands; money is needed, and there is no money; under the Reagan administration budget allocations have steadily dwindled. The 99th Congress cancelled a 3.4 billion dollars programme which was the main source of allocations for maintenance of the local police, the fire department and other public services, and increased appropriations for "star wars" (3.5 billion dollars). Is it not the same money?

Merrilie Jackson said that a simple comparison of these figures had been an eye-opener for her.

The movement of mayors and city councillors for social responsibility which began in Oakland, California, a year ago, has already spread to dozens of city councils. The city fathers have decided to draw up an "alternative budget" based on real problems which they know better than anyone else. The "alternative budget" has become a powerful argument against the arms buildup. "Our primary concern should be people, not weapons," Merrilie Jackson said. The Rev. Albert Rowe recalled the prophetic words of Dr Martin Luther King: "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defence than on programmes of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

We appreciated the frankness with which people spoke of their problems and troubles and we tried to reply in kind. It was extremely interesting to observe and listen to them. And they, too, were interested in asking us questions and hearing our answers. Why? Apart from natural curiosity about a strange country and a different way of life, we felt that the people we met looked to us for answers to the questions uppermost in their minds. What were we really? Enemies? The source of a threat? Or simply "another part of God's world"? Proceeding from different premises - fear of a nuclear holocaust or urban deficiencies, they had arrived at the same conclusions: the arms race must be ended, the nuclear bacchanalia must be brought under control. But all these conclusions could collapse if the worst that had been said of us was confirmed.

Why do whales throw themselves ashore?

The arms race is madness, it is senseless, irrational - we repeat this like an incantation a hundred times a day. But this madness has its own rationale - fear of the adversary, the striving to make oneself secure against a threat. The more ruthless, pitiless, abominable the adversary appears to be and the more fearsome the threat, the more justified is military spending - whatever the cost in sacrifice, tightening of belts, stagnation of cities, and catastrophes - commonplace and apocalyptic.

News reports about herds of whales throwing themselves ashore stagger the imagination. What madness possessed them, we wonder in our ignorance. But the question should be posed differently: why did instinct betray them, what accounts for the departure from normal behaviour, what presentiment of disaster was so powerful that it blinded them to the real danger and led to collective suicide?

Fear prevails over a sense of reality. This is truly the affliction of our time. But fear can be instilled, can be implanted in the subconscious, turned into an instinct that paralyzes reason, inducing impulsive, involuntary reactions. This can be done by politics and propaganda which are capable of overwhelming man with not decibels but megatons of the most

insidious, persistent, heartrending, brain-dizzying and bone-crushing devices. Negativist information about "the other side," stripping it of any attractive, human features whatsoever, its demonization.... Thus, the "image of the enemy" is created, surrounded by an "iron curtain" with a Hollywood-style "empire of evil" backdrop. Thus the arms buildup is "justified." This done, no matter how much weaponry has already been accumulated, it will always be too little and there will be prefabricated excuse for demanding new and more and more powerful and accurate, enormous and miniature, simple and complex, costly and inexpensive, offensive and defensive, offensive-defensive and defensive-offensive, maximal-minimal destructive weapons all the way to the point where the Doomsday machine itself reaches technical perfection, i.e., is put into production - a small, portable model, cheap enough for anyone to afford and sold in every department store.

That is indeed madness and it leads to the degradation of man and society. Reason cannot but rebel against such insanity. As a matter of fact, even before captive reason rebels, humanity as such will do so.

Message to a "Siberian Woodsman"

A collection of photos were displayed on a wall of the church to which we had been invited to share a community supper with the parishioners. The photos were Russian, the captions, American. Ordinary Russian faces - happy, thoughtful, sad. Simple everyday scenes. the captions were vague and full of a wistful sadness.

The photo of a woodsman bore the caption: "Who has imagined that I would not go to work with you in the forest?"

Beneath the picture of a laughing boy: "Who has imagined that I would not laugh with you?"

The faces of people snapped in a village street: "Who has imagined that your death could be negligible to me?"

Who had taken the photos and written those extraordinary captions, I asked Pat Roberts, the lady who was taking care of us that evening. Before she could reply, I myself was caught up in another wave of questions and we were separated for a while. Happily, Pat had not forgotten my question, and a few days later I received a letter from her.

"Dear Alexander," she wrote, "Here - at last! - is the poem part of which was used as captions for the pictures that hung on the wall at the time of our supper together at Trinity Church in Princeton.

"The poet is Wendell Berry, who is now, I believe, in his mid-50's. He is a Kentucky farmer, has written a number of volumes of poetry and has recently won an award for his work." There were a few words about the political news from Moscow and the hopes associated with it. At the very end of the letter she returned to Wendell Berry: "Let us hope," she wrote, "that your daughter and my sons will be 'free of the weapons and official hates that I have borne on my back like a hump.'"

The poem is entitled "To a Siberian Woodsman" and has the parenthetical subtitle - "After looking at some pictures in a magazine." Pat sent me the magazine and so I am able to quote a brief excerpt from it. After describing his impressions of the photo of the Siberian woodsman, how he himself pictured the distant life of this man and, adding a few words about his own life, his home and family, Wendell Berry writes:

"Who has invented our enmity? Who has prescribed us hatred of each other? Who has armed us against each other with the death of the world?

"Who has said to us that the voices of my land shall be strange to you, and the voices of your land strange to me?

"Who has imagined that I would destroy myself in order to destroy you, or that I could improve myself by destroying you? Who has imagined that your death could be negligible to me now that I have seen these pictures of your face?

"Who has imagined that I would not speak familiarly with you, or laugh with you, or visit in your home and go to work with you in the forest?

"And now one of the ideas of my place will be that you would gladly talk and visit and work with me."

If the underlying idea of Bridges for Peace were capsuled in a single line it would read thus: "Let us look into each other's eyes, let us visit each other, talk and work together."

Humanity, a political factor!

That sentiment is precisely what attracts American peace champions to the Bridges for Peace. They want confirmation of their assumption that politics has become so far removed from the human being that it is the root of all the trouble. Politics has turned against man and burdened him with mountains of weapons that will break his back even if they do not blow him up. This being so, humanity must be restored to politics.

They are right. The most inhuman weapon of all time - the weapon of total genocide - can be defeated only by the weapon of humanity.

How warm was the reception we were accorded in New Jersey! There was nothing personal about it. We were welcomed as representatives of what was for them a newly-discovered country, a land of Openness, Reform, a land capable of self-criticism and repentance. They saw in this confirmation of the humane character of our society. Truly, we were mistaken when we believed that the image of an irreproachable but stone-faced monolith was the most attractive one. That image could inspire respect, but it could also inspire distaste and fear.

"We have exchanged roles," the people we met told us. "Now it is you who have a dynamic leader and we, a helpless man impossible to deal with." And added: "Perhaps we ought to exchange?" We heard this somewhat crude but obviously well-meant joke many a time during our visit. Evidently it occurred to many people at the same time.

Rarely in the history of Soviet-American relations have we been received so warmly and pleasantly as we were this time.

We like to talk about the human factor, using the phrase appropriately and inappropriately, but understanding it in the narrow sense, pragmatically, reducing it to a matter of zeal on the job, productivity of labour. But is it not also a factor in politics? The human image of the leader, a reputation for a humane policy which can be earned only by its open, creative character, its breadth and genuine humanism of content - this is a truly invaluable asset. It must not be squandered, it must be husbanded and augmented!

The programme of the final day of our visit included a conference on the subject "Creating a World Beyond Stereotypes" at the Woodrow Wilson School of Princeton University, and the annual dinner of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament with a guest speaker, the Sovietologist Professor Robert Tucker. His talk was entitled "An American View of the Gorbachev Era." The professor was thorough, erudite and true to the canons of his calling. Much of what he had to say is debatable. But - did I imagine it or really hear it? - there was a note of sympathy in his treatment of the subject. (It happens once in a blue moon!)

"The crucial evidence that a society is in the throes of cultural change," he said, "is the emergence of conflict between exponents of new ways and defenders of the old. That is what we see now in Russia.... It may seem - as it does to some observers - that the new leadership will never succeed in the fight for reform. All that this scholar can say in reply is that four decades of being a Russia-watcher have taught him the motto: where Russia is concerned, one must never say never."

"Would it be in the best interests of the West for Gorbachev's reform course to succeed, the professor asked. And replied in the affirmative. For there is a direct "relation between the 'perestroika' and the 'new thinking' in international affairs." For "the willingness openly to confront the existence of profound internal problems" calls for more international cooperation. For "a Soviet Russia that comes, through reforms, to enjoy a great measure of general welfare, that

grows more open and pluralist within its present political structure... will be abler and readier to work with other states to construct a desperately needed cooperative regime of war prevention and deal effectively with global problems."

Looking back...

... There was the curious question asked during one discussion: could there be any bloodshed in nuclear war since blood would not flow, it would boil and evaporate?...

A trip lasts as long as we think of it and return to it in our memory. Separate moments, conversations, faces, "meetings on the Bridge" that occurred during our trip to the U.S. keep coming back to mind.

I recall a talk with Dorothy Morgan - as usual on the go, in a car. As we drove past her house, she remarked that she and her husband had built it 38 years ago: they had ordered the framework and her husband had done the rest with his own hands. He's a jack of all trades, she said. Was he a carpenter, I asked. No, just an amateur. Actually he is an engineer, specializing in aircraft engines. He even invented something in that line. A valve he designed had been on the Moon.

I was so amazed at this information that I turned right round to look at her. Dorothy Morgan's deeply lined face was impassive.

Where did he work? He used to work. But when the firm he was with got a military contract he quit. For a while he taught at school. Now he had retired. During the war he was a flying instructor in China. He often remembers how he celebrated the New Year, 1942 together with the Russian flying instructors there. He says that is one of his happiest memories, she told me.

... I remember an amusing sign in a nursery school: "How many teeth did you lose today?" What an ingenious way of measuring the process of growing-up, I thought. The phrase stuck in my memory and I once passed it on to Patricia Compton, the indifatigable Patricia, whose energy and temperament would suffice for a good dozen public organizations at once. She laughed. "Wouldn't that do for a slogan for universal and complete disarmament?" she said.

And indeed, why not?

New Jersey - Moscow

ECONOMIC PERISCOPE

MICROCIRCUITS SMASHED WITH A SLEDGEHAMMER

A swing of a sledgehammer, and pieces of semiconductor microcircuits fly on the lawn in front of the Capitol. A close-up of smashed radio sets made by the Japanese company Toshiba gives way to its name cancelled by a No Entry road sign. Then the camera shows a furious Congressman accusing Toshiba of "making it easier for Russians to kill Americans."

Why has the Japanese company incurred the wrath of Congressmen? Because in 1983-84, contrary to bans by COCOM (Coordinating Committee for Control of Strategic Exports to Communist Countries), it delivered eight milling machines to the Soviet Union. These machines supposedly made it possible to work the blades of the screws of Soviet submarines with such precision that the NATO means of detection can no longer register their sound. And now the insidious Russian submarines can sail undetected up the Potomac as far as the Capitol.

The charges that Toshiba had violated COCOM rules were made in April. In order to avoid irritating Washington yet again, the Japanese government adequately punished the company and promised to impose stiffer terms for the sale of equipment to socialist countries. It seemed that these measures mollified the United States. In any case, shortly before the legislators began exercising with the sledgehammer, the Pentagon chief Caspar Weinberger stated that he was satisfied with the punishment. He also secured Japanese consent to compensation for the damage supposedly inflicted by Toshiba on Western security. The Nakasone cabinet agreed to cooperate in the development of new means of detecting Soviet submarines.

Photo from Newsweek (U.S.A.)

It is not surprising, therefore, that the new flare-up of hysteria over the "Toshiba affair," involving among other things the televised sledgehammer scene, amazed even those politicians in Tokyo who have seen more than one anti-Japanese outburst in their time. The more so, they know well that Toshiba has not inflicted any damage on Western security. According to Western press reports that refer to NATO intelligence, the noise of Soviet submarine screws had perceptibly reduced long before the delivery of the Japanese milling machines.

Raising a clamour over imaginary threats is a favourite way of twisting the arms of allies-cum-rivals. And Washington resorted to this once again. It did have a pretext: a conference of COCOM members was held in Paris in mid-July. At the meeting Washington's representatives not only demanded further restrictions in trade with socialist countries but also raised the question of replacing the "gentlemen's agreement" to coordinate restrictions with "multilateral commitments."

Nobody across the ocean even tried to conceal that the outburst of emotions over the "Toshiba affair" pursued precisely this aim. "With the Japanese now in a listening mood," wrote Business Week, "the U.S. should sit down with private Japanese companies and relevant government agencies to explore ways to tighten monitoring of high-technology exports to communist countries."

So there is an obvious link between the "Toshiba affair" and the intention to involve leading Japanese firms in the SDI programme within the framework of the July 21 agreement. The Pentagon has long been coaxing Japanese electronics firms to share with their American competitors the technology of manufacturing integrated microcircuits. Toshiba is one of the six Japanese companies that early in the 1980s captured 70 per cent of the American market in semiconductor microcircuits, the main component of electronic equipment.

In order to fight off competitors, the White House, using the Pentagon as a proxy, launched its strategic semiconductor initiative last year. An agreement on trade in semiconductors was also forced on Tokyo a year ago. But in April of this year the U.S.A. accused Japan of violating it. (Please note that the "Toshiba affair" also began in April.)

As we see, the televised show on Capitol Hill was only an episode in the "semiconductor war" in the course of which Washington is trying to overtake and surpass its dangerous rival or, should it fail, at least force it to play according to Washington's rules. Here Washington is trying to use both a stick, that is a sledgehammer, and a carrot.

At the very time when the legislators decided to ban all Toshiba exports to the United States, the management of the company received a very tempting offer. It was asked to study the question of starting the production of high-precision machine tools in the United States. The offer came from the Pentagon.

FELIX GORYUNOV

The Mystery of Operation Demavend

LEV MAKAREVICH

The U.S. Congress completed its investigation of the Iran-Contras affair. The testimony given by those involved consisted of part-admissions, half-truths, and numerous omissions. As a result, the masterminds of the affair still remain in the shadows. But they have left plenty of traces in Italy, for instance...

...The assassination had been planned down to the smallest detail.

A Volkswagen packed with fifty kgs of dynamite was supposed to explode at the exact moment when the car carrying the investigating judge Carlo Palermo drew level with it on the corner of the Pizzolungo embankment in Sicily's Trapani suburb.

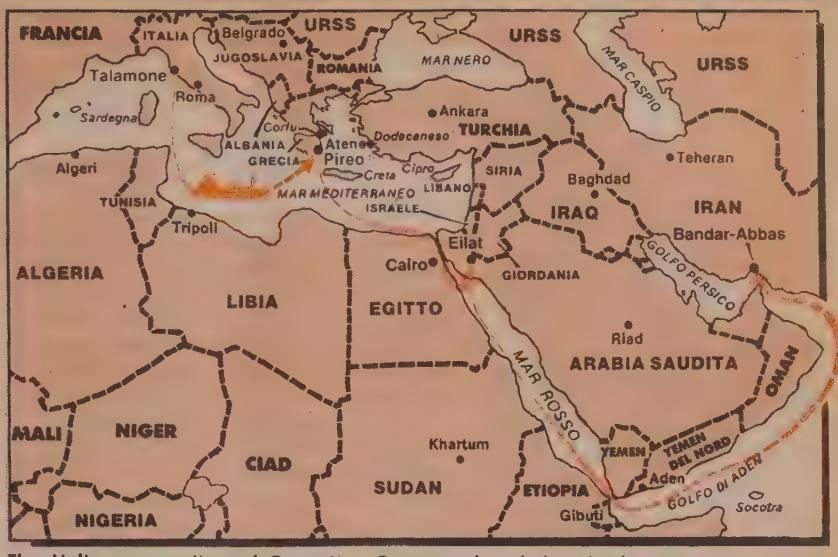
And that is what would have happened had not Palermo been saved by a miracle. When the assassins pressed the button of the remote-control device, a small Golf car suddenly inserted itself between the Volkswagen and the judge's car, and took the main impact of the explosion.

The judge and his bodyguards escaped with shock and minor injuries. But of the passengers of the Golf - a young mother and her six-year-old twin boys, whom she was taking to school - practically nothing remained: scraps of skin, a foot, and part of a child's face smashed against the wall of a house....

The crazed in the basement

To use the language of the Mafia, the judge had received his death sentence back in 1980 in Trento when he first started to investigate the underground trade in weapons and narcotics.

Everything began with his inquiry into a petty affair - a secret heroin warehouse discovered in the Trentino-Alto-Adidge region. From the warehouse the trail led to illegal trade in small arms. At first it was the little fry that were arrested, and they admitted they had brought heroin and morphia into Italy from the Middle East in return for small arms and rifles.



The Italian connection of Operation Demavend and the North group.

From Panorama (Italy)

Then the persistent judge got onto the big shots. First, in November 1982, he caught up with Henry Arsan, owner of two import-export firms, Stibam and Arexport, with headquarters in Milan. Palermo did not suspect how big his catch was, or the forces he was up against.

Arsan had been supplying weapons to Iran on behalf of the CIA and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA). Our magazine has already described how these deliveries began in 1981 (see New Times, No. 18, 1987). It is now possible to give a more exact date: 1979-80. To recapitulate the story.

In November 1979, the staff of the U.S. Embassy in Teheran were taken hostage. The CIA was left with practically no one in Iran who could supply the required information. Langley's intelligence potential in the country had been badly undermined following the overthrow of the Shah. The Pentagon was instructed to release the American hostages, but it had to operate in an unknown situation with a complete absence of reliable information.

The U.S. Department of Defence set up an additional section for the collection of intelligence and the implementation of Operation Eagle Claw to extricate its countrymen.

In April 1980, Eagle Claw ended in failure. The helicopters sent to carry out the rescue operation crashed at night in the desert with loss of life.

The Pentagon then decided to set up a permanent joint group to coordinate para-military actions and espionage. That was how, shortly after Reagan took office, the Section for ensuring intelligence operations was set up without the knowledge of Congress.

Among the most active members of the section were Lt. Colonel Oliver North and Major General Richard Secord. Together they drew up plans in the early 1981 for the sale of AWACS aircraft to Saudi Arabia. The hundreds of millions of dollars derived from the sale were used to help the Contras in Central America, the dushmans in Afghanistan and for other operations in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

But that was not the only source of money. That same year the Pentagon launched another new section - The Special Operations Division. Dubbed "the crazed in the basement" (its headquarters were in the basement of the Department of Defence), its agents carried out secret missions abroad for the CIA and DIA - from El Salvador to Ethiopia, and from Afghanistan to Angola. They were chiefly the brainchild of the CIA. While formally not part of the Langley establishment, they could act almost entirely free of Congressional control.

One of their operations, code-named Yellow Fruit, was to finance illegal groups abroad, using laundered money earned from the sale of arms and narcotics.

That marked the formation in 1979-81 of the influential military-intelligence junta, a sort of invisible government in the U.S. It had its own army, its own espionage and subversion service and its own finances, and conducted its own policy.

The Pentagon and the CIA needed a pretext to begin the supply of arms designed to restore their lost position in Iran. This was supplied by the tension that arose between Teheran and Baghdad in 1979, a tension that soon developed into a long-drawn-out war. That very same year 1980, when Carlo Palermo began his investigation - a former pilot of the French Naval Air Arm, Bernard Veuillot, who had chosen the risky but highly profitable trade of arms

dealer, established the first contacts with Teheran. The pretext he used was the delivery of insecticides from Belgium to Iran.

Three American secret services - the CIA, the DIA and the National Security Agency, immediately got down to developing these contacts. Through this crack that had been opened to the Islamic Republic, ships and transport planes from different countries began delivering weapons to the "terrorists" (the White House descripition for the Khomeini regime). The operation was codenamed Demavend, after the mountain in Iran.

More than 2,000 million dollars worth of equipment was delivered. In point of comparison it could be noted that Lt. Colonel Oliver North's Iran-Contras deal amounted to only 100 million dollars.

Shortly afterwards Carlo Palermo was convinced that the trade in arms and narcotics directly involved certain senior staff at the U.S. embassy in Rome. At the end of 1982 the judge sent an official letter to two American diplomats requesting their presence for questioning. The letter was ignored.

In August 1982, when Carlo Palermo was tracking down Henry Arsan, the United States National Security Council (NSC) approved the secret part of the "Democracy Project" drafted by Oliver North (its official part had been announced by Reagan when addressing Britain's Parliament last June). The covert operations provided, among other things, for support for the contras, and military supplies for Iran, including deliveries through the Italian port of Talamone.

From that time deliveries of weapons to Iran proceeded along two channels: from North's group through the National Security Council and from the Pentagon within the framework of Operation Demavend. Were they parts of a single plan? Or was the Colonel's contribution only a cover for much larger deliveries?

The end of 1982 - the beginning of 1983. Iran was desperately in need of spares for American military hardware, which made up 95 per cent of its arsenal. Only a few of its 250 F-4 fighters, bought before the Shah was overthrown in 1979, remained operational.

As part of Operation Demavend, Bernard Veuillot, already mentioned above, and another French death-dealer, Claude Lang, who had links with CIA, set up the Daloa Finance company in Panama to supply American arms to Teheran.

Henry Arsan, arrested by Judge Palermo, could have given a great deal of information about all this. But he died in mysterious circumstances in San-Vittore prison in Milan. Thus an important thread was snapped. But the ball was still there.

When in April 1983, steel handcuffs clicked on the wrists of engineer Partel, a real panic started in the CIA and the DIA. When Carlo Palermo applied to the Italian Ministry of the Interior for information, its electronic memory came up with the following:

"Glauco Partel. Born 1926. Graduated three colleges. Former Naval officer. Heads a privately-owned design office in Rome - Rocket Engines Research Centre. Member of the Academy of Sciences in New York, London and Paris. Patents for inventions in rocket engineering. Works for American secret services. Expert on disinformation. Access to top-secret NATO information. Registration No. 543."

The judge did not put Partel behind bars. It turned out that the engineer was operating within the law. But he did supply his investigator with a great deal of interesting information as to how the illegal deadly business functioned, and about the operations of the American secret services, including the supply of arms to Iran. And although he revealed nothing about Operation Demavend and North's group, Palermo was able to dig up a lot on his own. That was extremely undesirable for both the CIA and the DIA.

In November 1983, the investigator questioned Captain Angelo De Feo, who for 5 years had held senior posts in the Italian Intelligence Service. The captain opened the judge's eyes to the real significance of Talamone port in the illegal arms deliveries, which were strictly controlled by the secret services.

But neither De Feo, nor Palermo could have known that the sharp increase of the flow of arms through Talamone in 1980 had been due to Operation Demavend, and later to the activities of the North's group. By October 1986, at least 60 vessels packed with arms and ammunition and headed for Iran had left the port.

Then Carlo Palermo made a new discovery: the trade in arms (both legal and illegal), or, to be more exact, the profits from it, was one of the channels through which American, Italian and other death-dealers were financing the ruling parties in Italy and putting pressure on them, or more specifically, on the Socialists, Christian Democrats and Republicans. Had they or other parties received a cut from the arms deliveries to Iran?

The judge is warned

However, the judge's attention was soon caught up elsewhere. In December 1983, the Italian government came down with all its weight on the investigator. It accused Palermo of defamation and dirty political intrigues and demanded that he stop his investigations forthwith.

He had provoked the anger of the authorities and not just because he had touched a sensitive nerve of the ruling parties - the financial nerve. The Americans had also, at the end of November, with the consent of the government, begun to deploy their nuclear cruise missiles in Italy. In these circumstances any major political scandal the outcome of which could be unpredictable was something the government, and all the more so Washington, did not need.

January-March 1984. The Magistrate's Supreme Council is busy questioning Palermo, accusing him of exceeding his authority and many other sins. But it was particularly interested in establishing how much he knew. Did Palermo lay his cards on the table during this interrogation? Be that as it may, at the end of April he was compelled to close the cases against a number of underground dealers, but he did not stop his investigations.

During that same period Oliver North was busy extending the network in different countries of private organizations that would finance anti-Communist organizations throughout the world, and to whom Congress had refused funds or given very little. The sale of arms to Iran at high prices was an excellent source of dollars.

Meanwhile Operation Demavend was doing well. At the beginning of 1984 the dealers involved ordered a big batch of F-4 fighter aircraft. The deal was actively supported by the National Security Agency. Michael Austin, owner of the New York firms Austin Airspace and Universal Airspace, joined in.

In June 1984, in line with a decision of the Italian Court of Appeal, the narcotics case was taken out of Carlo Palermo's hands and moved from Trento to Rome. That was a clear signal: be a good boy, or....

But the judge refused to give up. He asked to be transferred to Rome. And when he learned that all his files were to be confiscated, he made an unexpected move. On June 23 he officially requested that a parliamentary commission - that watch-dog over ministers - investigate the activities of certain members of the Craxi government and leaders of the Socialist party.

The Judge's files and his request once again placed the five-party government in an extremely unpleasant situation. Parliamentary elections were due shortly. But Palermo's démarche, like a bomb with a burning fuse, made them forget even the most important problems.

Such an investigation would have been an even greater threat to Operation Demavend and Colonel Oliver North's activities. It was in the summer of 1984 that he had introduced his old colleague Richard Secord to the leaders of the contras. The scale of deliveries was increasing and North badly needed the general's experience.

In October 1984, Carlo Palermo was moved to Trapani. The judge was pleased. He had wanted such a move, since he had a particular interest in the South. He was able to establish that the

transfer points for the illegal trade in arms and narcotics were American bases in Italy, among them the naval base of Maddalena near Sardinia. It was from there that ships loaded with military supplies sailed for Iran.

The Sicilian Mafia (especially the Greco and Liggio families, which had long-standing ties with the CIA and the DIA) took an active part in the operations.

Interest in Palermo's investigations in Italian political circles continued unabated. Those behind the scenes were losing patience. In January 1985, the first plan for the assassination of Carlo Palermo took shape, and in April it was put into effect. It coincided with major deliveries under Operation Demavend. Specifically, Michael Austin had arranged the sale of another batch of F-4 aircraft to Iran through Egypt (Cairo was told that the planes were for Turkey)

In December 1985, the Court of Appeal ordered Palermo, who had been returned to the capital, to hand over the case on underground arms deals to Venetian judges who shelved it.

In the meantime an important change had taken place in the Iran-Contras scheme. On December 4, McFarlane quitted his post as National Security Adviser and his job was taken over by John Poindexter. That same day Oliver North suggested doing without the Israeli middlemen and dealing directly with Teheran. The Lt.Colonel was convinced that it was to Tel Aviv's advantage to drag out the negotiations on the release of hostages seized in Lebanon, as the super-profitable trade with Iran would continue.

In the White House, Reagan, Shultz, Weinberger, McFarlane, Poindexter and Casey considered the problem. Then on January 17, 1986, the President signed the directive on direct deliveries of arms to Iran without the knowledge of Congress, those blabbers and weaklings (White House description). Then the unexpected happened, and placed the whole of Operation Demavend in jeopardy: the American customs caught the arms dealers red-handed.

At the hastily arranged trial in Manhattan (New York), Michael Austin pleaded guilty to arranging contraband deliveries of arms to Iran from the United States. The sentence passed was ludicrous: 20 weekends in prison. Plus the warning: Don't talk. That won't help matters.

Austin's arrest threatened a leak of delicate information. A chase began and then, in April 1986, other participants in the operation were arrested, some of them in Italy. This could have led to unpleasant new exposures for the Pentagon and the CIA. Those who had been arrested were ordered to keep their mouths shut. Those who hesitated were given a clear warning: on July 28, 1986, an Iranian mediator, Cyrus Hashemi, was murdered in London.

In February of the same year, U.S. secret services again turned to the Italian military intelligence service SISMI for help: North's group had begun the first direct deliveries of weapons to Iran bypassing the Israelis. The aim was to speed up the release of hostages taken in Lebanon.

In order to win favour with Iran, the CIA began supplying Teheran with intelligence information.

On May 28, when former National Security adviser Robert McFarlane, accompanied by Oliver North and CIA agent George Cave, who spoke Persian fluently, arrived in Teheran for talks that proved fruitless, back in the Pentagon in room 2B-869 an important conference lasting over 2 hours was taking place. It was attended by officials of the Department of Defence, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the DIA and the Special Operations Division. They discussed the viability of Operation Demavend for further illegal deals. It was finally agreed that the affair should continue.

In August, North's group established contact with a new Iranian middleman who had personal access to the Khomeini government. The offer remained the same: weapons and intelligence information in return for good will and the hostages.

The only danger came from possible leaks and potential witnesses. In August 1986, the Mafia (the Liggio family) began preparing another attempt on the life of Carlo Palermo - this time in Rome. But then another way out was decided on.

Murder will out!

On September 18 Palermo was brought to trial in Venice, on a charge of exceeding his authority in a petty case in 1981. Palermo calmly listened to the opening stages of the trial. When asked whether he wanted a postponement, he replied that, on the contrary, he was prepared to answer right away, but only on the one condition: that he be allowed to use equal weapons. Which? Material on the contraband arms trade.

The reaction was immediate: the trial was postponed indefinitely. Palermo's case was returned to the archives.

And a month and a half later, on November 1, 1986, the Irangate scandal burst into the open. Was it a revenge on Reagan? By whom? Teheran? Israel? Or maybe the military for Geneva and Reykjavik? Each day the scandal, like a steppe fire flared up with fresh force, as one sensational exposure followed another of secret deliveries of arms to Iran. All this confirmed the evidence collected by Carlo Palermo.

The flames of the fire jumped the Atlantic to strike Italy. Unpleasant facts for the government began to come to light. That members of the Cabinet had been openly lying when they officially denied that arms had been shipped to Teheran. After Rome joined the embargo

Carlo Palermo: a vendetta victim of the CIA or the DIA!

From Panorama (Italy)

(in June 1984), the interministerial committee issued at least 8 permits for the export of arms to Iran.

The shipments (Operation Demavend? or North's?) had taken place not only from American bases in Italy, the port of Talamone, but also through the offices of the Palazzo Margherita, where the American embassy has its headquarters. In March 1987, American ambassador to Italy Maxwell Rabb had to appear before a Manhattan court, which was examining, independently of Congress, the smuggling of arms from the United States to Iran. Were the same diplomats to whom Carlo Palermo had sent letters to appear for questioning to take part?

In the flames of the polemics many true friends of the United States could have been burnt. So an old acquantance of Carlo Palermo, engineer Glauco Partel, a tested ally of American secret services, was pressed into service. On November 30, 1986, he arranged a controlled explosion by giving a sensational interview to the Rome magazine L'Espresso.

The engineer confirmed much of what Palermo had discovered and what had become known from press exposures - the violation of the embargo, the designation of Talamone port, the deliveries of arms to Iran and other CIA and DIA operations (true, there wasn't a word about Operation Demavend and North's activities). But he spoke twice of the main thing - namely that many Italian public figures were in the pay of the American Central Intelligence Agency. And that many politicians, ministers, and senior military officers benefitted financially from the arms trade.

The accusers stopped talking. Could it come out in Italy who and which forces were actually behind the affair? What will happen if they start talking? Events continue to develop. ■

"Honesty is such a lonely word..."

"This is the first time I've been in the Soviet Union. And it's a most unusual tour. I've dreamed about this for a long time," says Billy Joel, a popular American poet, singer and pianist.

"'Billy, is this just a concert?' people often ask me.Yes, it's a concert, but I'll be glad if my performances in Soviet cities will promote better understanding between our people and help bring them closer together. I'm not a politician or a military expert, but I'd like to show my own peace initiative, to make my own contribution. I attach great importance to my mission, every artist should express himself in something that's truly important to him.

"We ordinary Americans are given distorted information about your country. True, things are beginning to change a bit now. You and I are now standing on the threshold of historic changes, and our cultural exchanges will help avoid boycotts and broaden contacts and understanding. I'm glad that music has an important role to play in this process. Music is the miracle that brings people closer together.

"I'd like to give many concerts like this one at home, in the United States.

"When I was a kid I used to bang away on the piano. That I finally became a musician was probably to be expected. My father played the piano, and my mother often sang in operas. My parents sent me to piano classes. The first composition I heard was 'Peter and the Wolf' by Sergei Prokofiev, and the first ballet I saw was 'The Nutcracker' by Petr Tchaikovsky. Russian music became part of my musical education, and had a tremendous influence on me. I had thought about a trip to the Soviet Union ever since Van Cliburn won the International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow. My grandmother used to tell me: 'The Russians have a wonderful soul.' Since those days I've kept this feeling of sympathy towards the Russians, towards your country.

"Not long ago in New York I heard some songs by Vladimir Vysotsky. They were translated for me, but I didn't get their full message. Still, I was eager to understand his songs, to understand his thoughts. I took the opportunity to visit the Vagankovskoye cemetery in Moscow where the singer was buried. I was surprised to see that complete strangers came to pay tribute to his memory. They laid flowers on his grave and recited his poetry. In our country such honours are done only to the President. People of different ages visited the grave, and there was a sorrowful expression on many faces. I could see that Vysotsky had deserved all this by his work, by his life. He was an outstanding personality, and he had given his all to the people.

"At my first concert in Moscow I told the audience that I dedicated one of my songs to Vladimir. The song is called 'Honesty.' 'Honesty is such a lonely word...' I wasn't mistaken: the audience greeted my words with loud applause. By the people's faces I realized how dear Vysotsky was to all who remembered him.

"'Billy, have you chosen the songs on this programme especially for the U.S.S.R.?' someone has asked me. I said that songs like 'Honesty,' 'An Innocent Man,' 'Good Night, Saigon,' need no translation. They are understandable to any audience. Knowledge and experience were required to write these songs. I was too young at the time to take to heart the tragedies which occurred far away from my country. A long and bloody war was on in Vietnam. Many people in the United States didn't understand what was happening. The President gave orders, and the military carried them out. Nobody stopped to think what it was all about. In the meantime, thousands upon thousands of innocent people died on the battlefields. But some time later, when the warplanes which delivered weapons and ammunition to Vietnam started bringing back zinc coffins, the air was filled with mothers' mournful cries over their sons who had done the so-called 'soldier's duty.' My song 'Good Night, Saigon' is devoted to these young soldiers. The tragedy of those days is a warning of what can happen today. It calls on all those living on this planet to take vigorous action, each must do his utmost to resist war, any kind of war.

"I can understand these feelings. I have a little daughter. She is taking her very first steps, both literally and figuratively. As a father, I feel responsible for her future and for the future of the new generations. So I try to express what I think in my songs. I admire the people who tell the truth. I stick to this principle in my work."

Recorded by Yaroslav NOVITSKY

Photo by Sergei Bermenyev

BILLY JOEL'S MONOLOGUE

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Old Tbilisi

The time-yellowed pages of leatherbound tomes recreate the past....

Before they started restoring the medieval part of Tbilisi, architects G. Batiashvili and Sh. Kavlashvili delved into the city archives. Their purpose was not merely to refurbish old houses and breathe new life into them, but to revive part of the national heritage, the atmosphere of bygone days and convey the Georgian idiom. Things went slowly at times. The important thing was to bring out the uniquely distinctive features of Tbilisi, a city many centuries old.

The fortress wall, which is one of the ancient capital's most prominent features, was restored to its original appearance in strict conformity with old drawings. The ancient basilica of Anchiskhati was given a new lease of life without disturbing the labyrinthine layout of the neighbourhood that had grown up around it through the ages. The result is a peculiar combination of old and new styles of architecture. Two modern buildings, one housing the Kalakuri restaurant and the other the Lagidze Waters shop, were fitted in only to set off the beauty of the basilica to best advantage.

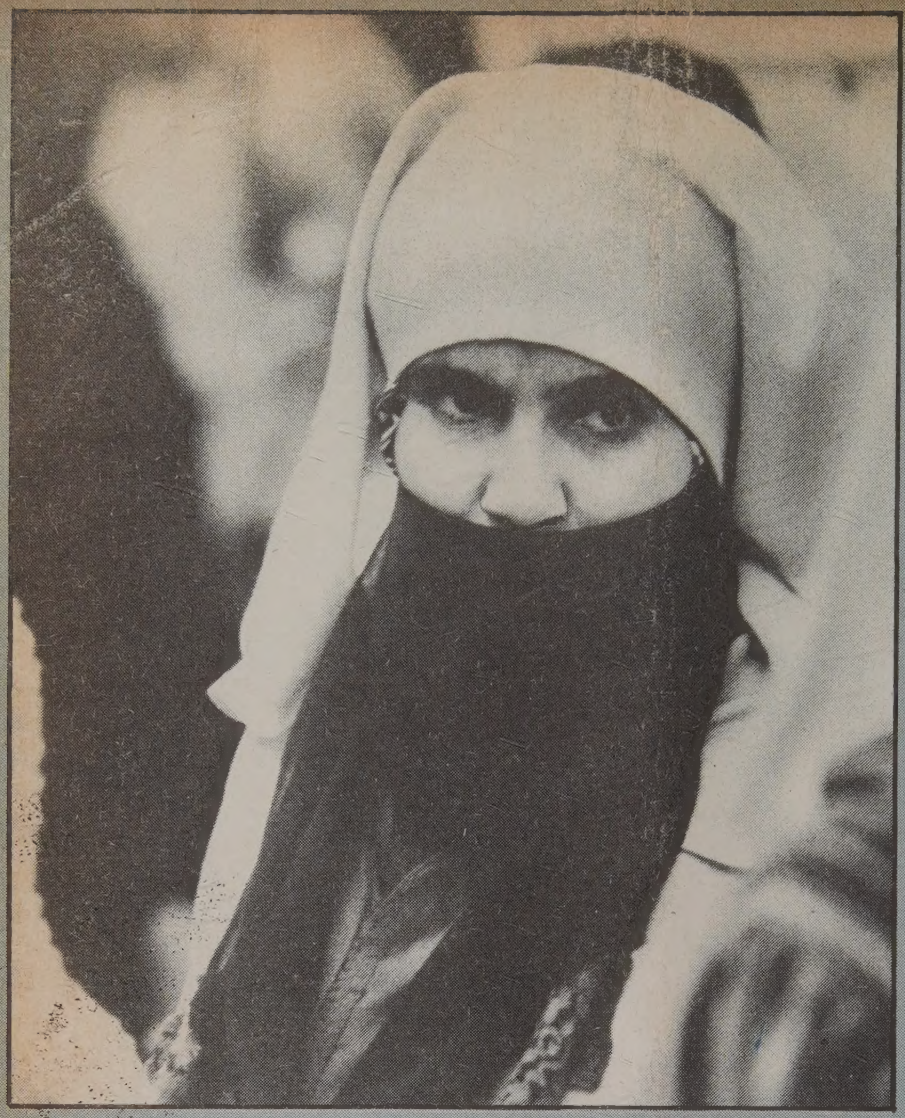
Squat fortress towers, constructed from heavy boulders, look almost as solid as the cliffs around them. The lacy balconies of the Metekhi castle overhang the sheer rock of the river bank. The contrast between beautiful works of architecture and their picturesque natural surroundings gives the city a charm all its own.

Tbilisi street scene.

Architect Shota Kavlashvili.

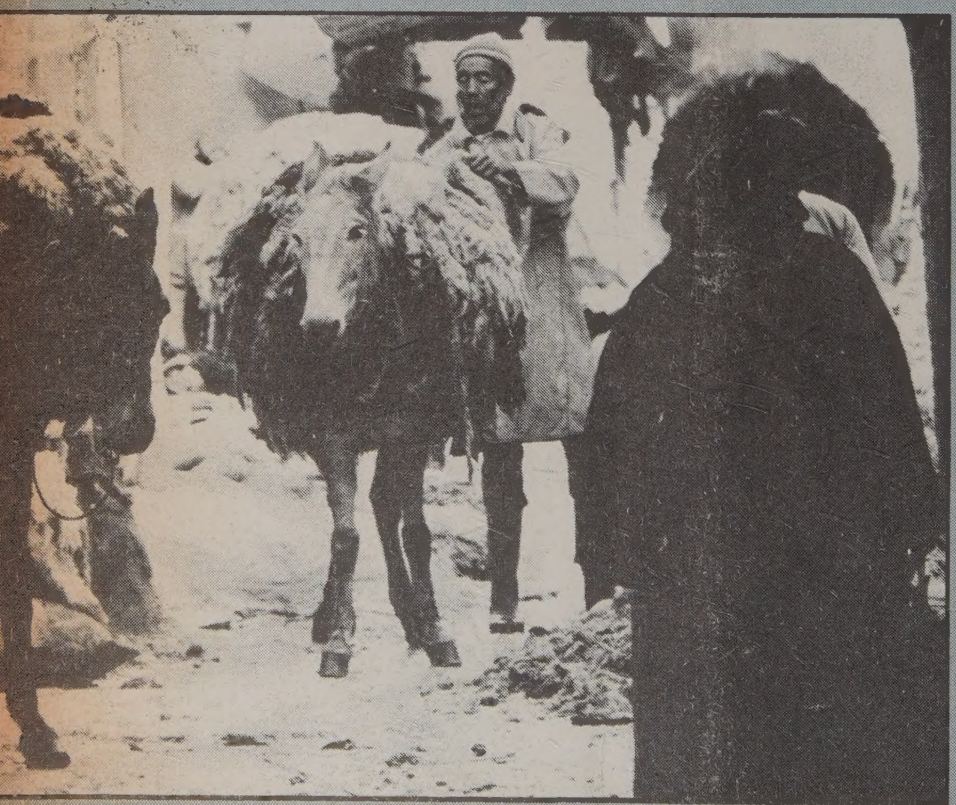
Metekhi castle.

Photos by Sergei Vetrov



A Moroccan girl.

An ancient craft.
(leather tanning vats in Fez)



Municipal transport.

Manfred Scholz (F.R.G.)

INTERNATIONAL CONTEST

MAN AND MANKIND

ИНДЕКС 70622 НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ